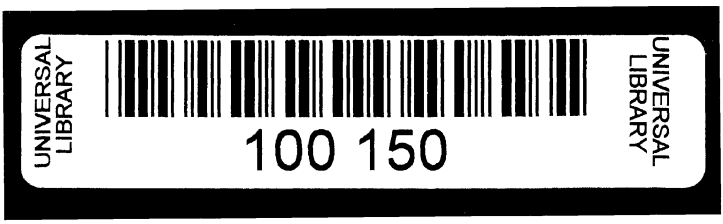
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MUSICIANS AND MUSIC-LOVERS

MUSICIANS AND MUSIC-LOVERS

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

WILLIAM FOSTER APTHORP

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To

HENRY BARKER HILL

PREFACE

Of the essays included in this volume, four—*Johann Sebastian Bach, Additional Accompaniments to Bach's and Handel's Scores, Two Modern Classicists*, and *John Sullivan Dwight*—have already been published. The one on Bach—originally given as a lecture at the Lowell Institute in Boston, in the course of the winter of 1886–87—appeared in the Contemporary Review for September, 1891; the one on Additional Accompaniments, in the Atlantic Monthly for September, 1878; the one on Two Modern Classicists (Robert Franz and Otto Dresel) was published in two parts in the same magazine for October and November, 1893; that on John Sullivan Dwight appeared on the day of his death, September 5, 1893, as an obituary notice in the Boston Evening Transcript.

Musicians and Music-Lovers is taken in part from an article of the same title that appeared in the Atlantic Monthly for February, 1879, and in part from a lecture on Musical Criticism, given

at the Lowell Institute in the same course as the one on Bach. *Some Thoughts on Musical Criticism* formed part of the same lecture. The essay *Music and Science* is for the most part new, although some portions of it are taken from another lecture, on Evolution in Music, given at the Lowell Institute.

The essays on *Giacomo Meyerbeer* and *Jacques Offenbach* originally appeared in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY for October, 1879, and the INTERNATIONAL REVIEW for March, 1881, respectively. Both have been rewritten, and, especially the one on Meyerbeer, considerably extended for publication here. Although I still fully hold all the opinions expressed in them, it will be well for the reader to bear in mind the dates at which these two essays, and the one on Additional Accompaniments, were first written. For some points in the last-named essay I would here thankfully express my obligation to Mr. Julius Schaeffer's two admirable pamphlets, *Friedrich Chrysander in seinen Clavierauszügen zur deutschen Händel-Ausgabe*, and *Seb. Bach's Cantate: "Sie werden aus Saba Alle kommen" in den Ausgaben von Robert Franz und dem Leipziger Bach-Verein.*

W. F. A.

BAR HARBOR, Me., June 28, 1894.

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MUSICIANS AND MUSIC-LOVERS

MUSICIANS AND MUSIC-LOVERS

PERSONS whose taste for music has brought them into contact with the more cultivated class of musicians must have noticed how difficult it is to talk sympathetically with them about their art. One can seldom broach the subject of music, on which most of us are inclined to express ourselves rather warmly, without having a certain chilling sense that the musician who happens to be present in no wise participates in that genial enthusiasm which, one somehow instinctively feels, ought to season the conversation. The musician, at such times, is apt to preserve a monosyllabic aloofness, which gives us no very favourable idea of his temper; it seems impossible to force him into sympathy with our point of view, which is generally a somewhat feverish one. If we have the ill luck to fall a-rhapsodizing in the presence of a musician over a composition that does not happen to be his own, we are usually met with a stare which, to the jealous, might seem not unflavoured with disdain, and, in spite of its struggles to be polite, says plainly

enough: "And pray what do you know about it?" It is hard to have a wet blanket thus cast over our fine feelings; but did it ever occur to us how difficult it is to talk, I will not say well, but with common, every-day coherence and sanity, about music? The musician knows this from sad experience; he knows that, to begin with, it will often take him some time to find out whether he is meeting the music-loving layman on common ground or not, whether he and his interlocutor are really trying to talk about the same thing.

There is no other art the various manifestations of which are so ill classified in the general mind. There are certain quasi-hierarchic distinctions almost universally recognized in the other fine arts. When a man has a wooden structure put up to cover his ash-barrel, he does not think of it as a piece of architecture; a fondness for Morton farces or dime novels is not usually spoken of as a taste for literature; and, because a person takes huge delight in the illustrations in the comic weeklies, we do not say he has a marked taste for art. To be sure, a wooden shed *is* a piece of architecture, dime novels are literature of a sort, and the cuts in *Puck*, *Life*, and the *Journal Amusant* are art; but, in our habitual use of these ponderous terms, we apply them only to works of a certain dignity. With music, however,

it is otherwise. Many people seem to think that music is music, and there is an end of it! A musician may be inveigled into talking about music with a man who astonishes him more and more every minute by the opinions he expresses—all of them of a general and sweeping description—until it dawns upon him, after a while, that, instead of thinking of Beethoven symphonies, Handel oratorios, or Chopin nocturnes, his friend's real point of departure is *Silver threads among the gold.* Not long ago I was invited to meet a man who had been described to me as devoted heart and soul to music; I am not sure my hostess *in posse* did not promise me I should find that he and I had much in common. The formalities of introduction once gone through with, my interesting new acquaintance and I soon fell to discussing the relative excellence of orchestral performance here and in Germany. Surprised at the disparaging view he took of the condition of instrumental music in this country, I was just about to point to what I considered a rather shining example, Mr. Thomas's orchestra in New York, when he forestalled my arguments by telling me of the rare delight he had experienced in listening to a little band of five playing popular melodies during the table d'hôte dinner at a hotel in Cologne. I was forced to admit that peptic music of that sort was

perhaps better cared for in Germany than elsewhere!

One is constantly exposed to misunderstandings in thus talking about music, and the instance I have related is no very exceptional one. Another cause of the difficulty attending general musical conversation is the widespread ignorance of the exact meaning of common musical terms. We Anglo-Saxons are, as a rule, more ignorant of musical terminology than the Germans or French. I have come across professed musical critics in this country who did not know, and showed plainly in their writings that they did not know, the real meaning of such terms as *score, instrumentation, intonation,*—terms of every-day occurrence in criticism. Not very many of the regular attendants at concerts know the different orchestral instruments by sight and name. And when it comes to terms that apply to the various forms of composition, such as *fugue, canon, sonata, rondo,* etc., their meaning is exceedingly little known outside the musical profession. This ignorance of musical terminology implies far more than a mere lack of acquaintance with what are sometimes called "abstruse technicalities;" it implies a deplorable absence of the habit of definite thought on musical subjects. People who have definite ideas to express do not long want for definite words wherewith to

express them; and it is mainly because so many persons have no distinct and clean-cut ideas on music that they do not feel the inconvenience of not understanding musical terms.

This brings me to the heart of the matter, to the chief and fundamental obstacle to intelligent conversation on music between musicians and music-loving laymen. The great trouble is that many, perhaps most, people deceive themselves. When they think they are talking about music, they are not talking about the music itself at all, but about how it makes them feel; and, as the world goes, there is probably no single subject the general discussion of which reveals so enormous a disparity between the intensity and the definiteness of the impressions people receive. So the musician, who perceives this quite plainly, finding that any discussion of the subject must needs involve personalities such as may not be entirely palatable to his interlocutor, can only take refuge in silence or evasive answers.

Few people really talk about a symphony, a song, or an opera; what they do talk about is the impression the work has made upon them: and this impression, although often violent and deep, is generally excessively vague. Most people speak of music merely subjectively, speak of how they like it or do not like it; only the few either speak or

think of it objectively, of what it really is or is not. The difference between the musician's and the ordinary music-lover's enjoyment of music is more in kind than in degree; it is a fundamental difference in point of view. Of course, I am ready to admit all the exceptions you please; I am speaking in generalities, and am fully aware of the truth of the excellent French saw: "No generalization is quite true; *not even* THIS ONE!" Indeed, the great difficulty of musicians and amateurs meeting on common ground, and interchanging ideas on musical subjects, is no imaginary one; and, although the trouble of you and your friend not knowing whether you are trying to talk about the same thing may be got over by circumspection, the other part of the difficulty is far more perplexing. A little preliminary probing will often throw all sufficient light upon the first trouble; but all rational interchange of ideas on the subject in hand will at times seem utterly impossible. And, if it is hard for the musician to discuss music with the layman, because of the vagueness and lack of definition of the latter's thought, how doubly futile must be a musical debate between two people neither of whom has anything definite to say.

I can not think the elusory nature of most people's thoughts on music, and their consequent inability to express them, arise from any inherent

difficulty in the subject-matter itself. It has been said that music is especially difficult to describe, that no description of a piece of music can convey any adequate notion of the impression the music itself produces upon the actual listener. This is true enough; but it is equally true of painting, sculpture, architecture, and poetry. You can not so describe a picture or statue as to convey to another the impression it will make upon him when he sees it; a symphony can just as well be described in words as a statue or picture, and no better. It is six of one and half a dozen of the other.

It is not the difficulty or impossibility of turning musical impressions into language that makes ordinary musical thought so vague and aimless and musical conversation so futile; it is the lack of what I will call critical habit in the average music-lover. He is too fond of merely hearing music, and has not sufficiently formed the habit of really listening to it. His musical ear has not developed the finer tactile sense; he does not lay hold of the music with it, as a blind man takes an object in his hand, to see what it is like, but lets the music stroke and caress his ear, as people have their back rubbed or their hair combed, because it feels good. And, as you can not tell, blindfold, just what your back is being rubbed with, but only whether it is

hard or soft, rough or smooth, slippery or sticky, so does the ordinary music-lover's ear tell him little about *what* he is hearing, beyond its being soft or loud, impetuous or languid, melodious or the opposite. I repeat that I am willing to admit all possible exceptions; naturally, the line of demarcation between musicians and unprofessional music-lovers can not be drawn very sharply, for some people who have never had professional relations with the art doubtless listen to music in much the same way musicians do, and not a few who make their bread and butter out of music are habitually very passive listeners. I merely wish to point out a characteristic difference between the general run of musicians and the majority of amateurs; in some cases this difference may be but slight, although, as a rule, it is quite strongly marked.

That the prime object of musical culture is to enable people to converse intelligently about music, might possibly be claimed by Lady Ambrose, in Mr. Mallock's *New Republic*, but hardly by any one else. It were nearer the mark to say that one of the aims of conversation on musical topics was to further the ends of musical culture. And, if I have begun by noting the exceeding rarity of rational talk about music, and the difficulty most people find in expressing definite ideas on the subject, it is because this seems to me one of the

most patent indications of where the screw is loose in these people's relation to the art. The chief trouble is that they have not formed the habit of musical observation. From looking at music simply as a source of vague sensual or emotional pleasure or a promoter of certain moody conditions in the hearer, and not thinking of listening to it objectively, to find out just what manner of thing it really is, people often fail to appreciate the relative importance of certain points, not only in this or that composition, in this or that performance, but in the very art itself.

A hundred things people say about music, a hundred questions they ask, show plainly enough how utterly they mistake the relative importance of various elements in the art. A man comes to me and asks me, as an expert: "What is considered by musicians to be the most perfect instrument?" He might as well have asked what is considered by upholsterers to be the most perfect piece of furniture. These are questions that have no answer. Or I may be met with an assertion like this: "The human voice is the most perfect of musical instruments; *therefore,* the accompaniment of a song should always be subordinated to the voice part." Now, even were I inclined to admit that the human voice *was* the most perfect of instruments,—which I can by no means do, for one in-

strument is as perfect as another, in its way,—I should absolutely deny the *sequitur*. That part in a composition should be made the most prominent to which the composer intended the greatest prominence to be given, and the perfection or faultiness of the instrument that plays or sings it has nothing to do with the matter. Such foolish questions and statements come from the utterly muddle-headed way many persons think about music; their whole musical experience is but a jumble of vague physical or emotional impressions. The man who asks which is the most perfect instrument has probably — for subjective reasons, which neither he nor any one can explain — become especially fond of the tone of some particular instrument, say the clarinet, and has a curiosity (of which personal vanity may be a factor) to know whether musicians, as a class, are as fond of it as he. This other person, who wishes the accompaniment always subordinated to the voice, takes such delight in listening to a fine voice, and so little pleasure in hearing pianoforte playing, that he naturally objects to the instrument's interfering with the voice part; to his mind, it is simply a question of the relative agreeableness of two different qualities of sound; *what* the voice sings, and *what* is played on the pianoforte, are to him matters of comparative indifference.

Not the least unfortunate result of the popular attitude toward music is that people in general, having nothing definite to say,—about the fifth symphony, for instance,—try to eke out their indistinct thought by falling into the rhapsodizing vein. Now, of all talk about music, the rhapsodical is unquestionably the flimsiest. Sweet poetry and soul-stirring eloquence can illumine most things in this world with a new and heavenly light; but when they try to chant the praises of a Beethoven symphony you have only to play a few measures of the divine music to make both poetry and eloquence seem very dark indeed. The brightest gas-flame shows black against the sun's disk; and who shall worthily rhapsodize about music, which is itself the most incomparable of rhapsodies?

It is peculiarly noticeable that musicians among themselves say little, as a rule, about the feelings music calls up in them; they talk about the music itself, and such talk is seldom of a nature to interest an outsider. I remember once listening to an impassioned performance of Schumann's overture to *Manfred* in company with a musician; all he said after the performance was: "How much more effect Schumann has drawn from his horns here, by using the open notes, than he often does by writing chromatic passages for them!" This was a technical point; as for rhapsodizing about the

music, my friend wisely let that alone. It is both curious and instructive to note how Hector Berlioz, a man who felt music with almost frightful intensity, and whose excitement while listening to some compositions approached the pitch of frenzy,—to note how Berlioz, in his series of essays on Beethoven's symphonies, seldom rises above the consideration of technical details.

I have said that the difference between the way a musician listens to music and that in which a less cultured music-lover hears it was more in kind than in degree. This is, however, strictly true only of the way both listen to or hear the higher and more complex forms of music; for there is music of some sort to which even the least cultivated music-lover, if he be truly musical by nature, listens in much the same way the musician does. All really musical people possess what I have called the power of musical observation to a certain degree, and their first instinct is to exert this power whenever they hear music. A piece of music, like any other work of art, is, or should be, in a certain ideal sense, a living organism; that is, each one of its component parts has an organic relation to the others, and all of them to the whole. To perceive this organic relation between the component parts of a composition is tantamount to what is commonly called *understanding* it; and such un-

derstanding is arrived at by an exertion of the power of musical observation. Now, a musical person as instinctively tries to understand whatever music he hears as we all try to understand what any one says when we hear him speak. It is the specifically unmusical person who hears music without making any effort to apprehend its organic form and understand it. But, though we can not help trying to catch the meaning of the snatches of talk we overhear in the street or in a horse-car, we are fain to give up the attempt so soon as we discover that the conversation is carried on in a language of which we are ignorant. Some charm in the speaker's voice, manner, or accent may still hold our attention fast, and we may even derive a certain pleasure from listening to the, to us, incomprehensible and almost inarticulate sounds ; but all endeavour to understand ceases. In much the same way essentially musical people stop trying to understand music so soon as they find the organic principle of its structure too complex and abstruse for them to grasp easily ; their power of musical observation is inadequate to the task, and they soon cease to exert it at all. They thus fall, quite unconsciously perhaps, into the mental attitude of the unmusical listener, who very possibly enjoys music intensely, but merely as a vaguely defined, emotional, and mood-promoting mass of sound.

It might seem, at first sight, a matter for wonder that vast numbers of people who are possessed of a real, if undeveloped, power of musical observation do not stick to the music they can understand, but often take quite as great or even greater delight in hearing that which is absolutely beyond their comprehension. That this is true is indubitable; and all astonishment thereat ceases so soon as we consider how immediately the emotional side of man's nature may be acted upon, while his intellectual faculties are nearly dormant. Many people vastly enjoy music the organic quality of which utterly escapes their apprehension, but of the emotional force and spiritual elevation of which they do catch a glimpse by a certain mysterious, intuitive second-sight. You do not always have to understand greatness to know when you are in its presence; you may *feel* it, without quite knowing how or why. I am here reminded of an anecdote the late John McCullough once told me about Miss Mary Anderson.

McCullough was on a professional tour through that part of the country in which Miss Anderson, then a girl of fourteen or fifteen, lived. One day some friends of hers called to ask him to come and hear a young girl recite a few things, and give his expert opinion of her talent; she was young, and had a strong ambition to go upon the stage. As

prominent actors are much exposed to inflictions of this sort, and such interviews end, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, in sheer boredom on one side, and sore heart-burnings on the other, McCullough exhausted all the excuses his ingenuity could invent, but was at last prevailed upon to go and hear the young prodigy. The first thing Miss Anderson—for it was she—recited to him was Gloster's :

> "Now is the winter of our discontent
> Made glorious summer by this sun of York."

McCullough said her declamation was very bad indeed, and it was evident at a glance that she did not understand more than half she spoke ; but there was an undefinable something in her performance that seemed to him to give promise of genuine dramatic ability. He asked her if she understood what all that meant ? "No," answered she, "I don't know what half of it means, but it's all sort of splendid, somehow, and makes you feel grand when you recite it !" You see she did not understand Shakspere, and would, likely enough, have understood Dr. Watts,—had that perspicuous moralist formed part of her reading,—but she *liked* her Shakspere for all that ! And this is the way hosts and hosts of people enjoy the great masterpieces of music : they "don't know what it

means, but it 's all sort of splendid !"—and a great deal more splendid than much of the music they can understand.

In hearing and attempting to judge of the higher forms of music, the amateur has, for the most part, only his feelings to guide him. To be sure, the most cultivated musician, even while listening to a composition for the first time, trusts largely to his feelings and instincts, and may thus seem to be much in the same case. But, from his superior culture, his feelings are far more trustworthy guides; beauties and imperfections strike his ear at once, and are felt by him instinctively, which it would take much study for the amateur to perceive. And by superior culture I do not mean merely a more extended special knowledge, but the well-digested and assimilated knowledge and experience which go to make fine artistic fibre in an organization of naturally æsthetic proclivities and specially musical bent. Real genius and original power can be more or less clearly recognized by every one. Yet I think the true position of genius, amongst the other qualities that go to make up what we call an artist, has often been—I will not say overrated, but—misunderstood. Some of us may have observed a seeming tendency in artists to speak slightingly of that heaven-sent power by virtue of which he who possesses it can

at will gain ascendency over the souls of men; yet we can not but feel that a man of wholesomely generous nature must needs reverence that which can work puissantly upon his emotions. The apparent inaptitude for this feeling that sometimes strikes us in musicians may be explained by the fact that the musical laity—deceive themselves as they may—are far more prone to yield to the influence of the composer's or performer's personality, as it is dimly revealed to them through the medium of tones, than they are to listen to the music specifically as an entity in itself. The musician is cautious about thus surrendering himself, unless the strong individuality of the performer or composer is revealed to him through a perfect medium. As has been said before, his feelings are a much surer guide to him than those of the amateur, and mere quantity of genius does not command them without a tacit protest on his part if he is not sure of its fine quality.

It is a mistake to think that a high degree of culture blunts the sensibilities; on the contrary, it sharpens them. The musician, studying a Bach cantata in the still solitude of his own room, knows an ecstasy of which the average music-lover has no conception; and it is the very intensity of his feelings that makes him careful how he exposes them to any but the best and finest influences;

his soul is a pipe, the stops of which must not be fingered by vulgar hands. Robert Schumann once said: "I should box the ears of any pupil who wrote such harmony as the first few measures of the overture to *Tannhäuser;* yet the thing haunts me with a strange persistency in spite of myself!" Some people would call this obstinacy, illiberality, or what not that is bad. But it was really the protest of the refined Schumann against a power, the genuineness of which he recognized, but of which the quality seemed to him open to suspicion.

That which we call genius in general—genius *schlechtweg,* as the Germans put it—is not so great a rarity in composers as might be supposed; what is far more of a rarity is distinctly and specifically *musical genius.* Richard Wagner, for example, is a man of unquestionably great power, of very uncommon genius; yet we can not help feeling, when studying his compositions, quite as surely as we know it from his autobiography, that it was largely owing to circumstances that he applied his genius to music. We can imagine his attaining to equal eminence in other walks of life. But, in listening to a Mozart quartet, we are sure Mozart was not only a born genius, but a born musician. To be sure, the difference in special musical training between the two men is not to be overlooked, and is all in Mozart's favor; but, if Wagner's genius had

had the specifically musical quality of Mozart's, we can not imagine his resting content until he had acquired an equal degree of musical culture. If Mozart had been a man of Wagner's quite phenomenal general culture, no doubt his music would have shown the effects of it; but the difference between the men would still remain: we should still have Mozart seizing everything by its musical side, making all he had observed and learned go to further musical ends; whereas, in Wagner, we feel that his music is the servant of his culture, that the operation in his case is precisely the opposite to that in Mozart's.

Innate power, whether general or special, is surely a precious thing, and must command reverence wherever it shows itself; yet, when we find an expression of power, however genuine, which is unsymmetric and not wholly beautiful, we may well doubt if the power itself be of the highest kind. An entirely great soul speaks to the world in chosen language; its meaning can not be conveyed in slipshod phrases; it has a native nobility of its own which shuns the contamination of an ignoble dialect, as a gentleman disdains billingsgate.

This has been so well recognized that what we call the power of expression is often regarded as a synonym for genius. It is just the nicer shades of distinction between the more or less musical quality

of genius which the amateur is, for the most part, unable to detect. When Schumann said of the many ungainly passages in Berlioz's *Fantastic* symphony, that we can appreciate their *raison d'être* only by attempting to remodel them, and by then seeing how utterly flat our improvements sound when compared with the original, he certainly admitted that Berlioz really had something to say in his music, and that it could be said only in his own way. This is good earnest of the genuineness of Berlioz's inspiration, but of its genuineness only; had the afflatus been as fine as it was real, the ungainliness of those passages could not have existed at all. A high degree of special musical culture is rare. The world of music the musician lives in is so little comprehended that many of his utterances concerning his art seem hardly to bear the stamp of common sense and reason. He may often seem inconsistent, contradicting himself day by day, while his apparently irreconcilable remarks on different occasions really supplement and complement each other, and are essentially harmonious instead of contradictory.

It is by no means true of the amateur that he is generally insensible to the bad effect of what is ugly and cacophonous in music; but his feelings are often shocked by what is merely unaccustomed, or by that of which the relevancy is not to be de-

tected by his uncultivated power of insight. And it can not be truly said that the amateur is alone in this; for even the most cultivated musician at times finds his musical perspicacity impotent in face of the utterly new and unwonted. It is well known how most of the great composers had to fight long and hard before their genius was acknowledged, not only by the world at large, but even by their fellow-craftsmen. It took musicians themselves some time to understand them. One of the surest signs of a composition's not being understood is the general complaint that it *has no melody*. This charge of lacking melodic invention has been brought successively against every great and original composer who has had to fight for appreciation and fame. At first his works are uncomprehended, and an outcry is raised forthwith that he has no melody in him; but, so soon as his works begin to be understood, this clamour ceases of itself.

We now smile to think of the great composers whom popular (and critical) blindness has, at one time or another, stigmatized as *no melodists*. We all can remember the time when it was the current legend that there was no melody in Wagner. And mark the curious fact that at that time the works in his latest manner were wholly unknown; when people used to say there was no melody in Wagner, they were not thinking of *Tristan*, the *Nibe-*

lungen, or *Parsifal,* but of the *Flying Dutchman, Tannhäuser,* and *Lohengrin!* But people's finding no melody in Wagner is quite a mild example of melody-blindness. After the first performance of Berlioz's *Fantastic* symphony in Boston, one of our newspaper critics complained that there was no recognizable melody in the work. Now hear, *per contra,* what M. Georges Noufflard, a French writer on music, says of Berlioz, and with especial reference to the *Fantastic* symphony, too :

"If, in the symphony, Berlioz has loosed the tie which binds together the several movements, he has, on the other hand, given more importance to melody, which was always in his eyes the only real musical unit."

But worse remains behind. I once read in a Paris paper a criticism on Weber's *Freischütz,* in which the writer said: "After all, this merely learned music touches me little; *I* prefer *melody.*" Here we have it! No melody in Weber, of all men in the world! But, oh, the irony of fate! For was it not this very same Weber who once wrote of Beethoven's fourth symphony that it had no theme, no development, no musical form, and was nothing but a mass of incoherent, ear-scorching harmonies, violent modulations, noise, and sheer musical chaos? Read Weber's criticism on the fourth symphony, and you will have to rub your eyes and

look twice, to make sure you are not reading Hanslick on Wagner's *Meistersinger* overture! Some people still talk in much the same way about Johannes Brahms, and I can remember, not twenty years ago, how exactly the same things were said of Schumann. In faith, the perspicacity of musicians has its bounds, and there are instances enough in the history of the art of their not seeing what would have bitten them, had it been a bear. Musicians, as well as music-loving laymen, are amenable to the law of mental inertia; only, as a rule, they throw off their inertia sooner.

Yet, leaving aside the domain of the new and unaccustomed, the amateur is prone to reject, as distorted and monstrous, many things which the musician will readily accept; he can not perceive at a glance the true relation of such passages to the remainder of the composition in which they occur, in virtue of which relation they appeal to the musician as beautiful and admirable. Upon the whole, the real or supposed faults that shock the amateur are quite as likely to be of secondary importance as they are to be actually damning; the musician may find them retrieved by predominant beauties, of which the amateur does not suspect the value, or else he may consider them so trivial in comparison with greater and more essential shortcomings, of the existence of which

the amateur is equally unsuspicious, as to make them hardly worthy of notice. Again, the amateur may be worked up to a condition bordering upon ecstasy by certain beauties which the musician appreciates quite as well as he, but which, to the cultivated perception, are wholly inadequate to retrieve many fundamental faults, unapparent to the vulgar ear. That it is, for the most part, utterly useless for the musician to attempt to justify his opinion in either case has already been hinted. Music is a subject on which all logic is wasted; at the very best, the amateur is persuaded that he *ought to feel* differently about this or that composition, but what he *actually does feel* will remain unchanged, for his musical likings and dislikings are, almost without exception, sheer cases of Dr. Fell or the opposite.

I have said that the general music-lover is apt to value music according to the mood into which it throws him. There are few persons at all amenable to musical impressions who would not indignantly reject the insinuation that this mood was not the result of the music's working directly upon the higher sensibilities, or, to use the accepted phrase, appealing directly to the heart. But the effect is often purely physical;[1]

[1] I here leave out of the question all purely scientific considerations as to the physiological or unphysiological and spiritual nature of psychical

that is to say, the effect of music upon the emotional nature of many men and women is analogous to the effects of alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, bromides, and other similar stimulants and sedatives. It is what Hanslick has aptly called a *pathological* effect. What other, non-physical effect music may have upon their emotions may often be referred to the force of association, and is little determined by the specific character of the music itself.

In so far as regards the force of association, the most cultured musician is to a great extent amenable to its influence. I know a musician whose father used to sing him to sleep, when he was a very young child, by humming "*Batti, batti,*" and "*Vedrai, carino;*" to this day, he can not hear either of these melodies,—which, in themselves, have little to do with somnolence,—without experiencing a pleasurable sensation of drowsiness. He feels persuaded that, had any other melodies the same association for him, their effect would be precisely analogous. But this is only one example of

phenomena. For my present purpose it is unnecessary to decide whether music, as such, is (as Hanslick says) a purely physical phenomenon that can appeal directly only to the senses, or whether it is (as according to Schopenhauer and Wagner) an immediate manifestation of the metaphysical essence (*Ding an sich*) of the universe. It is sufficiently accurate here to use the expressions, "appealing to the heart" and "appealing to the senses," as they are understood in common parlance.

the force of association in music; there are other ways in which it is felt, and in which it has a much stronger influence upon the general music-lover than upon the musician. The title of a composition,[1] the conditions under which it was written, the effect it is known to have had upon this or that notable person, in short, any romantic circumstance connected with it, can exert an influence upon the emotions of which the music, by itself, would often be incapable. The music only tends to heighten and vivify an idea which has already gained ascendency over the listener's feelings.

How strong this force of association of ideas is may be judged from the manner in which the greater number of music-lovers express themselves when speaking of music, and by the compositions that have won the largest share of quasi-sentimental notoriety. If a novelist, public speaker, preacher, lecturer, or other not specially musical person (supposing him to know enough not to go into maudlin raptures over the Æolian harp) have occasion to refer casually to a musical composition, you may be pretty sure it will be either Beethoven's *Pastoral* symphony or Mozart's *Requiem*; if not these, it will be the (so-called) *Moonlight* sonata, or perhaps the thunder-storm piece of the Freiburg or-

[1] Let the reader only think of the influence upon the imagination of so-called program-music!

ganist, or else something for the *vox humana* stop. Now, without calling into question the intrinsic value of the *Pastoral* symphony, it is by no means the one of the glorious nine most calculated to captivate the popular taste in a purely musical way; there is little in it, as music, to entitle it to the singular prominence its name has acquired. But it has a peasant's dance, a thunder-storm, a breaking forth of sunshine through the clouds, rustling leaves, murmuring brooks, nightingales, and cuckoos; it is interwoven with all sorts of rural associations, things that can be easily talked about, and call up remembrances that can be definitely placed in our consciousness. In speaking of the *Pastoral* symphony, the non-musician feels that he is treading on not entirely unknown ground. As for Mozart's *Requiem*, probably not one out of a hundred persons who admiringly mention its name has ever heard a note of it, or knows the first thing about it, save that it was the composer's last great work, written at a time when he was in sore trouble and misery. Its sublimity is taken for granted; it is not reverenced so much for its musical worth, as because it was the swan-song of a great and suffering man.

Influences of this sort, so all-powerful with the great mass of men, are almost without effect upon the musician. He looks upon music as music; the

most perfect orchestral thunder-storm in the world leaves him cold and indifferent if it is not at the same time a fine piece of composition; he does not admire a phrase because it cunningly imitates the babbling of a brook, but because it is beautiful music. The ordinary music-lover, in speaking of music, is eager to fix his impressions by the aid of metaphors and similes taken from the other arts or from every-day life; the musician speaks of the entrance of themes, modulations, trombone passages, and the like. In the hundreds of conversations I have had with musicians about music I can remember only a single instance of a cultivated musician's laying stress upon an extrinsic beauty in a composition; and that was when Dr. Hans von Bülow, speaking of Raff's *Im Walde* symphony, said: "Oh, that setting-in of the gray morning twilight in the finale is overpoweringly impressive!" That was the only time in my life I ever heard a musician speak of music in such fashion. In writing about music, Richard Wagner and Hector Berlioz have at times indulged themselves in this sort of simile; but even Berlioz, the chief of "program-composers," wrote at the end of the descriptive preface to his *Fantastic* symphony that the distribution of the "program" among the audience might be optional with the conductor, as he hoped the symphony itself would have suffi-

cient musical interest to stand on its own merits as a composition, apart from the dramatic story with which it was connected. As a foil to what I have told of the "twilight" in Raff's symphony, let me give an instance of an opposite character. Not long ago I was reading through the second finale in *Don Giovanni* with Mr. Otto Dresel; all of a sudden he stopped playing, and cried out: "Do you know, it takes a confounded amount of genius to have thought of bringing in that figure again just here! And it is only by a common deceptive cadence, too!" Nobody but a musician could have expressed himself so.

It is a pretty widespread notion that the uncultured music-lover stands in the same relation to inferior music that the musician does to the great masterworks of the art; that the musician enjoys, say, Beethoven's A major symphony or Bach's Passacaglia in the same way and to the same extent that other people enjoy the overture to *Martha* or even Bardazewska's *Maiden's Prayer*. As it is impossible to get any direct evidence on this point, inasmuch as we can not enter into the consciousness of two persons at once and listen with their ears, we can found our judgment only on the various emotional phenomena we observe in either class of listeners. There can be little doubt, however, that A's mental attitude toward the A major symphony,

and B's toward the overture to *Martha,* are very similar in some respects; but in others they are probably very different. A musician, after hearing a great work, does not, as a rule, care to have it immediately repeated.[1] If he sees the same composition on a concert program next day, it will probably not attract him more than would any other piece of equal merit. But his enjoyment of the work lasts him a lifetime; it increases with every successive hearing, if the performance be a good one; the composition is a well of delight to him that can never run dry. But when the ordinary music-lover hears a piece of music that particularly pleases him he generally wishes to hear it over again, and that, too, *instanter;* he will listen to it, day in and day out, till he gets thoroughly sick of it, and never wishes to hear it more. He sucks and sucks at his musical orange until nothing but the dry peel is left, and then throws it away. It is, in general, only pleasures of the sensual sort which thus lure men on to immediate excess, and then pall on them after a while.

There is, no doubt, a strong sensual element in the musician's enjoyment of music; but he is not

[1] I am here supposing a case in which the musician listens to music solely and simply for the sake of musical enjoyment, not in order to study a composition.

content with this alone: his finely strung nature protests against yielding completely to the influence of music which he suspects of having a merely ephemeral hold on his emotions. He tastes it, as it were, and enjoys its flavour, but is careful to stop short when there is danger of intoxication, for that brings on headache and other undesirable discomforts. He enjoys music as an art, as something in itself grand and beautiful, not as a stimulant nor an anodyne. That music can act in both these capacities has already been said, but the musician seldom uses it in either. The simile between music and wine is an old one, and there is more truth in it than some recent theorists would have us believe; it does not cover the whole ground, but it covers part of it very well. There is an enjoyment of wine that is not entirely sensual, for it calls into play the powers of comparison and judgment. The connoisseur and the boor enjoy it in quite different ways; the pleasure the one gets from fourth-rate whiskey is not that which the other gets from fine Romanée-Conti. The connoisseur delights in the wine itself, in its flavour and bouquet, the boor revels in its effect; and the latter enjoyment to a certain extent precludes the possibility of the former. Substituting music for wine, we have a good example of the relative points of view of the musician and the

musical layman. The difference between them lies not so much in the class of music they respectively enjoy as in the way they enjoy it.

It is not easy to decide which one of the constituent elements of our modern music [1]—such as rhythm, melody, clang-tint, movement, harmony, counterpoint, thematic development, and symmetry of form—appeals most directly to the majority of music-lovers. If the question were put, the answer would probably be, in nine cases out of ten, *melody.* Yet considerable self-deception may exist on this as on other points. No doubt the average ear demands a quality in music which it can recognize as pleasingly melodious; this is almost a *conditio sine qua non.* But I think sheer *quality of sound,* what is nowadays called *clang-tint,* has, in general, greater power over the emotions of the music-loving public than melody pure and simple. And be it remembered that this power is wholly physical. A grand and imposing sonority, a well-timed *crescendo* or *diminuendo,* have such command over the nervous excitability of most persons as often completely to silence their habitual demand for purely melodic effects. The choruses, "Crucify Him," in Mendelssohn's *Christus,* with their overwhelm-

[1] I use the term modern as denoting music written in the modern tonal system, in distinction from music written in the old so-called church modes.

ing effects of sonority and almost total lack of what is commonly called melody, have many more sincere admirers than the corresponding *turbæ* in Bach's *St. Matthew-Passion*, in which the dramatic effect resides almost wholly in the melodic character of the theme itself. Last winter a volunteer correspondent of one of our newspapers evidently thought he had suggested a conclusive reply to the objections made by some critics to Verdi's *Requiem* —on the ground that the music depended too much on sheer effects of sonority—by asking the question: "Did it ever occur to some people how difficult it is to score a really grand and noble noise?" When Goldmark's *Sakuntala* overture was played for the third or fourth time in Boston, a listener who sat in front of me turned round after the performance and said: "Say what you please, your Haydns and Mozarts and Beethovens couldn't give you a glorious mass of orchestral tone like that!"

The first thing most people notice in a singer is whether he has a fine voice or not, and their opinion of his merit is commonly based on its quality. Ask the first person you meet if he thinks Signor X—— sings well; he will answer, "Yes, I think he has a beautiful voice;" or else, "No, his voice is wretched." The absurd questions one hears put every day, such as, "Do you prefer instrumental

or vocal music?" and the equally unmusical statements, like, "I hate an orchestra, but I adore a brass band,"—the more pallid terms *like* and *dislike* are seldom used in such cases,—all tend to show how great the power of mere quality of sound is, and how strongly it affects the musical likings and dislikings of most people. This is also proved by the singular popularity of instruments of novel or otherwise striking sonority, such as the xylophone, Glockenspiel, set of finger-bowls, flowerpotophone, and what not. Some people will hardly notice a tune when played on a pianoforte or by an orchestra, but will go into ecstasies over the same tune—especially if it be of a grandiose and majestic character—when played on the mouth harmonica; *experto crede*, I have seen it myself!

That the effect of quality of sound *per se* is purely physical is none the less true because it has a strong influence over the emotions; a beautiful tone may even provoke tears. I know a contralto singer who can bring tears into some eyes simply by singing a long-sustained A; and singers in general are fond of talking about "throwing the tears into their voices." Yes, there are tears in voices —and in onions and cat-o'-nine-tails, too; but in many cases they spring from sheer nervous irritation. Indubitably a melody can, of itself, appeal

directly to the heart.[1] But the question is not so much what a melody can do, as what it actually does do in the majority of cases. To make an experiment: take one of the most perspicuous, beautiful, and heart-moving melodies in existence, the one beginning with the words, "*D'un pensiero, d'un accento rea non sono,*" in the second finale of Bellini's *Sonnambula;* let it be sung with fairly correct expression and finish of phrasing by a voice in no way distinguished by beauty of *timbre.* In an average audience the greater number of listeners will be little moved by it. But let it be sung by a voice of great richness, and especially of fine vibrating quality, and nearly the whole audience will be deeply affected. There is an orchestral arrangement of Schubert's *Ständchen* that used to be in vogue some years ago, in which the melody is repeated by various solo instruments. I have always noticed that in this piece the 'cello and oboe left the audience comparatively cold and unsympathetic; but, when the cornet's turn came, nearly every one was aroused to a high pitch of excitement. The melody was the same, but the thrilling tone of the cornet was what moved the public.[2]

[1] The reader will bear in mind that I still use this expression in its common acceptation, not with scientific strictness.

[2] How intimately the enjoyment of sheer quality of tone is connected in the minds of most people with their appreciation of melody may also be

But people will say: Is then our enjoyment of music no more than our enjoyment of champagne? Are our cherished ideas of pathos, sentiment, and the whole great art of tones tugging at our heart-strings a mere delusion after all? By no manner of means! Hearts are touched, tears do flow, from other causes than mere nervous excitement. The self-deception is not about the result, but about the cause; in innumerable cases it is not so much the music itself that touches the music-lover's heart as it is the performer. His pathos, sentiment, or passion speaks directly to the hearts of his hearers; so powerful is his influence that he can at times make many a listener forget for the moment the whole sensuous effect of music he commonly prizes so highly. I have heard a singer whose voice may be said to realize the *ne plus ultra* of unmusical harshness, and whose singing, judged from an artistic point of view, is simply atrocious; yet she seldom fails royally to command the emotions of her hearers by the sheer intensity of her dramatic power of expression. What she sings matters little; she is almost invariably sure of enthusiastic applause. This is, to be sure, an extreme case, but by no means unprecedented.

Do not think I attribute too great weight to the

judged from the very common (but, to the musician, meaningless) expression: So-and-so has a *melodious* voice.

part the performer's personality and executive talent play in the effect music has upon the average listener. Only think, for one thing, of the positively enormous place the virtuoso fills and ever has filled in popular estimation; think of the numbers of people who are drawn to concerts, and at the highest prices, too, when a world-famous singer's or player's name is down on the program! For what, think you, does the average music-lover look first, when he reads the advertisement of a concert in the newspaper? In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he looks first to see who is to be the solo performer; what the program is to be interests him only secondarily. Show me the man who looks first to see *what* is to be played or sung, and I will hold him in my very heart of heart—as a music-lover who deserves to be a musician!

I have spoken of the chief and most characteristic difference between the musician's listening to music and the ordinary music-lover's hearing it, as being a difference in the exertion of what I call the power of musical observation. I have also said that the way in which the musician listens to the higher and more complex forms of music, and the average layman who is really musical by nature listens to the lower and simpler forms, is, in some respects, one and the same; that the naturally musical layman instinctively exerts his power of

musical observation, as far as it will go, and gives up the attempt to grasp the meaning of a composition only when he finds it hopeless. And I would now insist especially on what seems to me an all-important point: that the best and possibly the only way for the musical layman to turn himself into a musician—at least in so far as regards listening to and appreciating great music—is for him to cultivate and develop his power of musical observation.

We all possess the power of observation to a certain extent; but too few of us have taken the trouble to develop it. And there can be little doubt that the process is, notably in its first stages, a laborious one. Agassiz, the naturalist, once gave a pupil of his a fish to look at, with directions to make a catalogue of all the interesting points he could observe in it. After an hour or so the pupil returned with the fish and catalogue, and asked: "What next?" "Oh! go back again and look at your fish some more," was the reply. Next day the pupil brought in a longer list of interesting items, but with no better result. On the third day the Professor looked through the catalogue more carefully than before; but, after considering with himself for a while, said: "Very good, my young friend, very good indeed! And now—well! if you seriously mean to be a natura-

list, really the best thing you can do is to go back to your fish and look at him some more!" It takes time to form the habit of observation, especially in so fleeting and elusive a matter as music; and that there can be no really artistic and appreciative enjoyment of music without a pretty distinct perception of what it is like is evident enough. The more laborious this perception, the greater the conscious effort to grasp the outlines of a composition, the less will be our enjoyment of it. Too many people stand in much the same relation to music that a certain Bey of Tunis did to the pictorial art. As a good and conservative Mahometan, this worthy Bey's experience in pictures had been confined to the arabesque drawings for which his nation is famous. But one day, while he was making a call of ceremony upon an English officer, an illustration in the *Illustrated London News*, a copy of which happened to be lying on the table, caught his eye; he took up the paper, looked at the picture intently, turned the page first one way up and then the other, but evidently could make nothing of it. At last a gleam of intelligence flashed across his puzzled face; putting his fore-finger upon a figure in the picture, he turned to the Englishman and said, with unfeigned delight at his own perspicacity: "MAN!" We all must have noticed a similar process of laborious

observation in very young children when they look at a picture. Some rudimentary intellects never quite master this first difficulty. I had an old nurse who never could be taught to tell whether a picture was right side up or upside down; it was all one to her. Had she known the phrase, she would probably have called it a "bit of colour." In the same way musical form, if at all complex, is as nothing to the perception of many a sincere music-lover; the trouble often is that he knows neither what to look for nor how to look for it.

Now, to what point does the musician first direct his power of observation? What element in a symphonic movement, a fugue, or any of the larger forms of composition, does his ear instinctively seek to grasp? Just the very same element that any little bootblack's ear tries to grasp in *Yankee Doodle* or *Home, sweet home*, namely: what is vulgarly called THE TUNE. I have spoken of the never-failing general outcry against new and original composers, that they have no melodic inspiration; practically the same charge is brought against the more complex forms of music by the uncultivated music-lover: that they *have no tune!* The frequency of this complaint shows how exceedingly difficult it is for many people to grasp the melodic essence, or *tune*, of a composition, even though it lie on the very

surface, whenever the form of melody is of an unaccustomed character. Indeed, a large number of persons refuse to recognize as a melody anything which has not what the French call the regular *carrure*, or square cut. For them a melody, to be recognizable as such, must consist of four sections, each section being four measures long, and a distinct cadence falling at the end of the second and fourth sections. This is the pattern on which are fashioned most of the popular tunes you hear whistled in the streets or ground out on hand-organs; it is also the type of some of the most distinguished and divinely beautiful melodies ever written. It may, in a sense, be called the perfect type of melody,—perfect, because a melody, so constructed, is a complete organic whole in itself. Such a melody catches the ear easily; its organic character is so very patent, the relation one phrase or section in it bears to another is so self-evident, that it takes an exceedingly slight effort of musical observation to grasp its outline and a correspondingly trifling effort of memory to retain it. It is understood, so to speak, at a glance. But, if the field of musical composition were restricted to the production of such melodies, this field would be narrowly circumscribed indeed! The plastic essence of all the larger and nobler musical forms is the development of one or more melodic phrases,

technically called *themes*, into a composition of considerable length.

Now, every composition, as has been said, must, as a work of art, have a distinctly organic character; and it may be said, in general, that what is true of all organisms is, and must be, true of really organic music, namely, that no single part or member of the whole structure is a complete and independent entity in itself. The human body is not composed, as a certain philosopher more than half surmised it was, of an infinite number of infinitely small human bodies held together by some mysterious bond of federation; it is the sum total of all its various members and organs, each one of which is important only in so far as it performs its allotted functions in the coöperative work of maintaining the well-being of the whole system. And a member's being thus able to perform its functional part in the general scheme depends, in a great measure, on its very incompleteness in itself. A self-sufficient leg, for instance, which could feed itself, care for its own needs, walk down-town by itself, and in time become the parent of other equally accomplished legs, might be an extremely interesting and even beautiful entity; but it would probably make a rather restive and unmanageable limb for ordinary use as a leg. In the larger forms of composition we likewise often find that

the melodies composers take for themes, that is, as germs from which their compositions are to be organically developed, have not that absolutely square cut, that perfect completeness in themselves, which is to be noted in tunes of the more popular sort. An already complete organic whole may indeed *grow*, but it can hardly be said to *develop*; it is the incomplete germ, or embryo, that develops.

In music a good deal of what is technically called *thematic treatment* consists in cutting up the primary melody, or theme, in resolving it into its prime factors. And this process of dismemberment is often of exceedingly difficult application to organically complete melodies. That which, when done to a less fully organized theme, seems an interesting dissection and analysis, strikes us as an unwelcome mutilation, when performed upon a complete and self-sufficient melody. Thus many of the finest melodies ever written would make poorish themes for extended musical treatment, while many of the grandest themes in the great masterpieces of music have *comparatively* little meaning and interest in themselves. It is just this lack of organic completeness, of absolute regularity of cut, in the thematic material on which much of the greatest music is based, that makes the perception of its

melodic outline a matter of such difficulty to people whose power of musical observation has been but little cultivated. But, whether patent or abstruse, the melodic outline is really there in almost every case; it only depends on your musical perspicacity to discover it. And until you have discovered it the composition will be a sealed book to you.

Of course the distinct recognition of a melody is but the first step toward musical appreciation; rightly to estimate its value, its properness to play its allotted part in a composition, implies far more. In regard to the appreciation of melody in general, it may be said that most people prize a melody more for its sensuous or emotional quality than for its thematic value. They are prone to consider its immediate effect upon the ear, or its dramatic power over the emotions, of more importance than its containing in itself the germs of a stoutly and symmetrically articulated composition.[1] This is

[1] The same may be said of the popular appreciation of harmonic effects. The average music-lover delights in the immediate effect upon the ear of certain chords or combinations of tones—such as, for instance, the dominant 7th and 9th, or the double *appoggiatura* of the 9th and 11th over the sub-dominant—while he has, as a rule, but little appreciation of that subtile connection between a symmetric sequence of chords wherein the true value of a fine progression lies. He prizes a chord or modulation for its own sake, without regard for its function as an organic part of the harmonic structure, nor for the circumstances under which it presents itself.

perhaps one of the reasons for the great popularity of much of the music of the present day with a large class of music-lovers. Although our contemporary music is perhaps not so fertile in merely ear-pleasing melody as was that of an earlier period, it can not be denied that it is, in general, rich in more or less melodic phrases of intensely dramatic character, which are violently exciting in a nervous way. And it is by no means impossible that the besetting tendency of much of this music toward incoherency and confusedness is not wholly the result of want of skill in thematic treatment in contemporary composers, nor of the complexity of the tasks they sometimes impose upon themselves; it may also be in great part explained by the intrinsically unthematic character of many of their melodies. These melodies appeal strongly to the emotions,—whether through the heart or through the nerves matters not,—but they too seldom contain in themselves the germs of an orderly composition; and the lack of this latter quality is the one of all others the average music-lover is the last to feel. The theme of Bach's G minor fugue is not, of and by itself, so stimulating as the melody of Verdi's "*Di quella pira;*" yet Bach's apparently homely phrase contains in itself the "potency and power" of the whole glorious G minor fugue, whereas Verdi's tune contains the potency and

power of absolutely nothing beyond its own screeching self.

The melodic phrase once perceived by the ear, or, as I have called it, the tune once caught, the next thing to do is to fix it firmly in the memory, that it may be recognized again at its every reappearance, that even its smallest component figures may be seen to be derived from and belong to it. To have sharpened one's power of musical observation to this pitch of keenness is to have done much,—much, but not all! Such chasing a theme through the mazes of a composition, and recognizing it wherever you can catch a glimpse of it, is essentially a musical process, if an elementary one. It is rather like Joe Gargery's reading. "Give me," said Joe, "a good book or a good newspaper, and sit me down afore a good fire, and I ask no better. Lord! when you *do* come at last to a J and a O, and, says you, 'Here, at last, is a J–O, Joe,' how interesting reading is!" And yet, elementary as this catching and recognizing themes is, it plays an all-important part in our understanding of a composition; many and many people listen to great music,—aye, and enjoy it, too, after a fashion,—without being able even to say: "Why, here is J–O, Joe!"

The next mental process in listening to music understandingly, and the one which taxes the lis-

tener's musical observation the most severely, is the perception of the relation borne by one part of a composition to another, that is, the perception of the organic character of its structure. Yet this process is, after all, very like that by which we arrive at the perception of a simple melody; indeed it is essentially the same, only, in applying it, the mind works with larger units. Music is in more than one respect like architecture; some of the larger forms of composition may be likened to a great street all planned out by one architect. There is, to begin with, the architecture of each single house; but the house is only a unit in the block, and the harmonious architecture of the block itself is to be considered, too. Again, the block is, in its turn, but a unit in the whole street, and the street can have its coherent architectural design as well as the single block or the single house. If we do not see many architecturally planned streets, we do have unnumbered organically developed compositions, the plan of which embraces the harmonious relations between larger and ever larger units. And the organic relation the practised ear finds to exist between the larger units in the scheme of, say, a symphonic movement, is not unlike that which the musical intelligence of less scope detects between the smaller units that combine to constitute a simple melody. For instance, that correspon-

dence in form which any one can notice in the first and last phrases of almost any common tune—say, in *Silver threads among the gold,*—is to be recognized, on a larger scale, in the great opening and concluding sections of the first movements of sonatas and symphonies. When this larger organic structure of a composition has been clearly perceived, then,—and not till then,—is the composition *understood.*

Here we have the essential elements of intelligent listening to music. First comes the clear perception of the melodic unit; then the perception of the organic relation between larger and larger musical units. This sounds rather dry and unemotional; but remember that it is the analysis of a mental process which is, in reality, no more complex than that of listening understandingly to the recitation of a poem, and not so complex as that of reading a novel. The dryness is in the analysis, not in the process itself.

No doubt, if this process of listening to music is accompanied by a conscious mental effort,—as it is almost unavoidably in listening to a complicated composition for the first time,—there will be a corresponding loss of purely emotional pleasure. This is why people, musicians included, *enjoy* new music less thoroughly than that with which they are already familiar. But the process must be

gone through with, notwithstanding, if specifically musical enjoyment is to be obtained, if the pleasure we derive from music is to be more and higher than a merely physical or vaguely emotional gratification. To be sure, the process is an intellectual one; but, if we deem the activity of the intellect any bar to the perfectly free play of the emotions, we must read the history of art backward! It is not intellectual *activity*, but only conscious intellectual *effort*, that checks the throbbing of the pulse; and it may truly be said that our highest and noblest emotions, certainly all such as it lies within the province of art to arouse, are appealed to through the intellect, and not through the senses alone. Be it remembered, furthermore, that what intellectual effort is at first required to understand music, to apprehend its form and organic quality, grows less and less with familiarity and practice, until at last it vanishes altogether. In any case, if the music be really great, the game is worth the candle.

It is the want of appreciation, on the part of the general music-lover, of the fact that the intellectual *effort* to understand the larger and more complex forms of music really does vanish after a while, and leave the emotional part of the listener's nature free to commune with what is emotional in the music itself, that has given rise to a very common

and, at the same time, utterly false and groundless fling made at the cultivated musician by unthinking outsiders: this is, that the musician is capable only of a merely intellectual enjoyment of music. Because the musician lives in a world of tones of which none but him has an approximately correct idea, and in which the uncultured music-lover can not at once discover the musical alcohol and morphine after which his soul thirsteth; because the musician declares that this alcohol and morphine are not the properest food for an æsthetic soul: he must forthwith undergo a contemptuous diagnosis, the upshot of which is that he is pronounced to be wanting in heart and all the nobler sensibilities and to cling to music by his intellect alone. No amount of argument will drive this idea out of people's heads when it has once taken root there; all reasoning falls from their understanding like water off a duck's back. Let it only be said here most distinctly that, of all the wrong notions that have ever bemuddled the human mind, this is the most utterly idiotic.

People in general listen to great music, as it were, in a dream; only the musician is fully awake and in sure possession of his faculties. He is not wafted helplessly hither and thither on a vaguely surging sea of sound, an unresisting prey to the composer's every whim. Music is his proper ele-

ment. As we see the torpid snails and barnacles in a rocky pool by the sea-side suddenly start into consciousness and activity as the first cool, oxygen-charged wave of the returning tide washes over them, so does the musician find in music the life-giving draught that arouses all his nobler faculties to action. He is, in very truth, the only real music-*lover;* others are but music-likers. They like music,

> . . . . "but much as we
> Down at the bath-house love the sea,
> Who breathe its salt and bruise its sands.
> While . . . . do but follow the fishing-gull
> That flaps and floats from wave to cave!
> There's the sea-lover, fair my friend!"

Music is not an alcohol to intoxicate the musician, an anodyne to bring mere momentary forgetfulness of the day's cares and troubles, nor a sense-killing potion to waft him lazily into luxurious hasheesh-dreams of a Mahomet's Paradise; it brings with it the wholesome oxygen necessary to his complete vitality. So soon as he is in the presence of a mighty composition, he plunges *into* the music, heart and soul, and his whole being is aroused to vigourous action. As Ambros has said:

"The enjoyment of a work of art is by no means a passive state; a correct understanding, and with it the highest enjoyment, consist in our re-creating for ourselves, as it were, that which is offered us by the composer."

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

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THERE are two kinds of men of creative genius: those whose works appeal to the many, and those whose message is understood and valued only by the few. In these days, when the niceties of culture are highly prized, we are perhaps a little prone to over-value exclusiveness, to deem the admiration of the vulgar a thing of small account. That a great writer should be incomprehensible to the many seems no shame, and some of us are not unwilling to go a step farther, and take obscurity to be a *prima facie* evidence of profundity; as Zola, in his grim, sarcastic way, once said of a certain tragedy: "The play was incomprehensible to such a degree that it seemed as if it must conceal some superior truth." Yet, if art is but another name for expression, perfect clarity and distinctness are among its most important elements; the poet who, like Shakspere, can give so sharp a point to a thought that it can pierce through the tough shell of unculture and penetrate the understanding of the boor, would seem to be greater, to be possessed

of more intrinsic artistic force, than he who, like Dante, is comprehended only by the student. The keen rays of Shakspere's genius kindle a fire in the breast of the unlettered mechanic as well as of the philosopher; the little bootblack in the gallery follows *Hamlet* as eagerly as the professor in the stalls, and, although some points doubtless escape him, he is all aglow with interest, and at least *thinks* he understands. But how many of us think we understand Dante? To students he is the light of lights, but most of us catch the rays of that sun only as they are reflected by other minds. Dante is below the narrow intellectual horizon of the many; to bring him within the range of our mental telescope, we must first climb to some eminence, and view him from there. Shakspere's rays dart down to the depths of every valley; for Dante to shine upon you, you must stand on the mountain-tops. And yet it were, upon the whole, quite as foolish to award the palm of superior greatness to Shakspere for his universality as to give it to Dante for his exclusiveness. One poet comes to us, as Carlyle said of Emerson, "with news from the Empyrean;" another brings tidings from the world around us; a third reports of what he has seen in the nether depths. The number of ears that are a-prick to listen to the message brought by any one of them will depend

not only upon the clearness of his statement, but also upon the very nature of the message itself. The genius who holds the whole world at his feet through centuries is not *de facto* either greater or less than the genius who compels only the homage of the elect. Art is expression, and the perfection of expression is that which is best adapted to convey the idea to be expressed; but the most perfect expression in the world will not convey an idea to a mind that is incapable of receiving it. Shakspere's popularity, to use a common phrase, is more extended than Dante's, not because he was possessed of a more highly potentized poetic power, but because he worked in a more familiar field.

I have chosen Shakspere and Dante as examples of two kinds of creative genius because they are not only familiar names, but their true status as men of genius, even the dominant cast of the genius of each, is pretty generally known. Also because one of them presents, in the character of his works and in the influence he has exerted upon succeeding generations down to the present day, many points of analogy with the great man of whom I have especially to speak here.

It were hard to say which of the great composers holds the place in the history of music that Shakspere does in the annals of poetry. But the Dante of music is unquestionably Johann Sebastian Bach.

I know that all analogies limp somewhat; but this one can fairly be said to keep its balance.

Bach's works, both during his own lifetime and since his death, have, as a rule, appealed only to the especially cultured few. There is hardly another great composer who has had so small a public as he. And yet no composer that ever lived is held in profounder and more loving reverence by those that do know him. It may be said of Bach, as Lowell said of Dante, that "his readers turn students, his students zealots, and what was a taste becomes a religion." The wild enthusiasm with which Wagnerians burn for the Bayreuth master seems poor and pyrotechnic when compared with the quieter adoration of the Bach lover. No one man has left so deep a mark on the history of music, nor has exerted so strong and far-reaching an influence upon the subsequent development of the art as he. If the great composers from Gluck to Beethoven studied him comparatively little, his works being for the most part unpublished and hard to obtain in their day, there have been few notable musicians since Beethoven who have not made his works the object of reverent study. The most dissimilar musical minds have found delight in him. To Mendelssohn and Schumann he was as their daily bread; the open volumes of his works cover the piano-

forte in Verdi's study; even Rossini could not withhold his tribute of admiration. So irresistible is the spell he casts over those who come within the range of his influence, that once you have crossed the threshold of his temple you are his, heart and soul, forever. The love of Bach is the most enduring of musical passions; I know that I can hardly open a volume of Bach without a certain feeling of superstitious terror; I feel as if the perusal of each page would be but a nail in the coffin of all my other loves. No matter what your enthusiasm for other composers may be, there comes a time when long communion with any one of them breeds satiety, and you cry for change; but you can return to Bach every day, and each time you find him greater, more wonderful, more all-powerful than before. And yet, from his time down to the present day, there has been no composer of distinction whose works are such a sealed book to the musical world at large, who is so little known save to the few. His lovers are worshippers, and call him greatest; but the great mass of musical people love him not. He is, as the phrase goes, the most unpopular of great composers. And mark the peculiarity of his case; for in this respect he is unique. He is not a man whose popularity is extinct, a thing of the past; unlike many great men whom time

and the changes of fashion have gradually ousted from a brilliant position before the world, Bach never enjoyed any marked popularity. Even old Palestrina and Gabrieli, dead as they are now to the public, were popular once; time was when all Venice and Rome rang with their praises, when eager crowds elbowed their way into St. Peter's or St. Mark's to hear a new work of theirs. But with Bach it is different; what slight popular recognition his works have had has pretty steadily grown rather than waned. Yet his position has always been a rather solitary one; all save a few of his works are still incomprehensible to nine out of ten of the musical public; indeed, he stands so far aloof from popular appreciation that any expression of warm admiration is pretty sure to be greeted with a smile of incredulity. Here in America to-day, you can hardly show enthusiasm for Bach, except in certain circles, without being accused of canting. I have even heard some people give elaborate reasons, not why they themselves took no pleasure in Bach's music, but to prove by argument that it was morally impossible that any one should find delight therein. No doubt some of the more ardent Bach-worshippers have at times given a colour of plausibility to the notion that the Bach-cult was not unmixed with cant; for, with the exception of Wagner, there is

hardly another composer whose admirers seem at moments to fall so nearly into the frame of mind of the French critic who wrote of Victor Hugo: "Every one has his own way. As for me, who speak here, I admire everything; like a brute." No doubt the Bach-cult one finds in some quarters is not wholly free from cant; I never knew any cult that was. But I must say that I have found less sham love for Bach in people I have met than I have for most of the other great composers. On the contrary, I have usually found Bach made the theme of the most up-and-down plain speaking. It is but another proof of the immense distance which separates him from the popular modes of musical thought. Many people who have to keep up a reputation for musical taste will bear the infliction of a Schumann quartet or a Brahms symphony quite smilingly; they will grin and bear it, and try to think they like it. But Bach marks the point where the worm will turn; he is the last straw that breaks the back of musical endurance, and people admit quite frankly that they find him intolerable. No doubt there must be something in the works of so many-sided a man as Bach which can reach the popular heart. The *St. Matthew-Passion* draws and holds large audiences both in England and America. But it seems to me that the growing popularity of the *Passion-Music* must

rest on pretty much the same causes as that of Handel's *Messiah;* and if the *Passion* continues to keep its hold on the public, it will probably be by much the same means. There can be little doubt that our love and reverence for the *Messiah* had, at first, more of a religious than of a purely musical foundation; and, taken as a whole, it is probably the text rather than the music of the *Passion* which appeals most strongly to the popular heart. Musically considered, the *Passion* presents no especial characteristics in virtue of which it should appeal to the public more forcibly than any other of Bach's choral compositions.

One seldom hears Bach's name mentioned nowadays uncoupled with that of Handel. It is, indeed, difficult to speak long of one of these two giants without mentioning the other. They had much in common; between them they may fairly be said to have exhausted the musical field of their time. It is idle now to speculate as to which was the greater of the two; much as they had in common, they were more alike in their greatness than in their lives, their fortunes, the specific character of their genius, or the influence they exerted upon the subsequent growth of their art. Handel passed the better part of his life face to face with one of the most brilliant publics in Europe, in energetic competition with men who, if not quite of his

stature, were still no pigmies. His rivals are forgotten now, save by name, but they were no weaklings. They dealt him many a hard blow in the fight for fame, and it took all his strength to overcome them; no less imposing a figure than his could have blocked the path to immortality for such men. They are forgotten, not because they were small, but because they were less than he. He saw one after another of his works performed by the most brilliant executive talent of his day. He had at command the fullest and best-drilled choruses and orchestras, and there is hardly an air of his that is not associated with the name of some great and world-famous singer. In a word, he lived in the very midst of the most ardent and active musical life of all Europe. Bach lived quietly in the retirement of small German towns; Leipzig was the largest field he ever had for the immediate display of his powers. While Handel was hurrying from London to Dublin, and from Dublin to Oxford, to bring out some great oratorio in the most brilliant fashion, Bach wrote for his little church choir. A cantata was written for one Sunday's service, was sung to the ordinary congregation, and then laid aside, only to be followed by a fresh cantata next Sunday. As for the style in which his compositions were given, it may be estimated that he probably never heard a very good performance

of any of his choral works. He had no great singers to deal with, and heaven knows he needed them if ever a composer did; his choir was small, and his orchestra, as a rule, miserably inadequate. He complained bitterly of it; but his complaints and expostulations came to nothing. Think of the masses of voices and instruments that Handel commanded, and then reflect upon the fact that no duplicate chorus-parts to a Bach cantata have ever been discovered. Bach's choir could not have numbered more than twelve or sixteen voices, for it is hardly possible for more than three or four singers to read at once from the same sheet. His solo-singers sang also in the choruses. He travelled little, and this, more than anything else, set an inexorable limit to the field of his public musical activity; for in his day, when all great composers were also great performers, and most great performers were at least respectable composers, no musician of note had much to do with any compositions save his own; it was only singers, as a rule, that performed other people's music. When a composer wished to have one of his works given, he brought it out himself. See how different those times were from ours. In Bach and Handel's day, if a composer lived in Leipzig, he was only heard in Leipzig; if he wished a work of his to make the round of Europe, he had to carry it

with him in his trunk, for no one else would take it for him. Now a symphony by Brahms may be performed on the same evening in St. Petersburg, Berlin, London, Boston, and New York, and Brahms himself be quietly smoking his cigar the while in Vienna, and, likely as not, know nothing about it. Then a composer had to paddle his own canoe, and, if he stayed in his own mill-pond, so much the worse for his fame.

Unlike as were the lives of Bach and Handel, their fortunes were no less dissimilar. Handel's popularity was almost as extended as his reputation was great. Bach, on the other hand, had, properly speaking, no popularity even in his own town. The congregations in Cöthen and Leipzig often complained of his organ fantasias and fugues and kicked against his cantatas, very much as the congregation of any Boston church you please might do to-day. He stood head and shoulders above all his immediate surroundings, and wrote constantly over the heads of his public. Then, as now, he was appreciated only by connoisseurs, by the *élite* of the musical world. True, his reputation was immense; his name was known pretty much all over Europe; but it was for the most part merely a reputation by hearsay. Even during his lifetime it was his luck to be one of those men whose greatness most people are content to take for granted; and

in this respect his reputation has not changed much since.

In the matter of style Bach and Handel had this in common, that they both wrote in the prevalent musical style of their day. But, admitting that the two men stood nearly on the same level in point of intrinsic genius, Bach was decidedly the more versatile of the two. His habitual style was at once more complex and more daring; it was what the French call more *personal*. Handel, especially in his later works, often shows himself as something of a mannerist; with all his genius he was liable to fall into certain set traditional grooves. Even an expert might easily take an air by Buononcini, Ariosti, or Alessandro Scarlatti to have been written by Handel. But almost everything by Bach is ear-marked; once know his style and you will hardly mistake it. You often recognize Handel only by the force of the blow he strikes; you detect Bach by the way in which the stroke is delivered. As Bach's style is more complex than Handel's, so is it also more subtile and elastic; with all its grandeur it is full of *finesse*. You find him always fully penetrated by the special character of his subject; everything he wrote seems to have been written with perfect distinctness of artistic intent, and he seldom, if ever, lapses into mere mannerism. He says just the right word for the occasion; with

the possible exception of Beethoven, no composer that ever lived was so little of a mannerist. You feel Bach's ever-vigilant will behind every note; his music never sounds as if it had written itself. No man, even among our modern romanticists and tone-painters, ever put a greater wealth of meaning into a phrase than Bach did.

But where Bach differs most from Handel is in the influence he exerted upon the subsequent development of the art of music. Handel's influence seems, upon the whole, to have been slight, and confined for the most part to England. His splendid development of the oratorio fired later composers to emulation in this particular form of composition; but his influence seems to have been more of a moral than of a material nature. His greatness and glory were an ever-living inspiration to the composers who came after him, but I doubt if any point in the technics of modern composition or of modern performance can rightly trace its pedigree back to him. I know that a good deal of the music written since his day has, now and then, a so-called Handelian flavour. But except in cases where a direct imitation was attempted, as in Beethoven's *Weihe des Hauses* overture and Moscheles's *Hommage à Hændel,* this influence can hardly be traced directly to Handel. What we loosely term Handelian in this or that composition is, in

partly at second-hand through Philipp Emanuel Bach, was immensely strong. In Beethoven, who had somewhat larger opportunity of studying Bach himself than fell to the lot of Haydn or Mozart—in Beethoven, and most especially in the works of his last manner, the traces of Bach's influence meet the eye at almost every turning. Indeed, Beethoven may be said to have been the first great composer who, in his study of Bach, penetrated very far through the outer shell of his works and assimilated something of deeper import than their technical side. The Bach influence may be said to have culminated in Mendelssohn and Schumann; he was, in fact, Mendelssohn's corner-stone, and without him Schumann would have been impossible. Nor was Bach's influence confined to the art of composition; our whole modern school of pianoforte playing derives, in the end, from him. In a word, Sebastian Bach is the great source and fountain-head from whence well-nigh all that is best and most enduring in modern music has been derived.

In him we find an influence so strong, so subtile, so far-reaching and pervasive, that that exerted by any other single composer is hardly to be compared with it. In him we find united all the requisite conditions for the exertion of such an influence. First, as great specific genius as was ever possessed by man, coupled with the most complete mastery

over the technics of his art that has ever been known. Next, a strongly characterized individuality. Then, that foreseeing spirit which anticipates new æsthetic points of view; and, lastly, the opportunity, the lucky chance of coming into the world just at the right time to find the exact task awaiting him which he was best fitted to accomplish.

It is not unnatural that, of all the various elements of Bach's prowess as a composer, his purely technical mastery should be the one which has met with the most universal recognition. Even those profane unbelievers who deny him all else, are willing to admit the vast extent and thoroughness of his musical learning. So immense, indeed, was Bach's command of musical technics, that this very power of his has often been cast in his teeth as an imputation upon his genius. When a man is so very learned, people have said, he can not be much else. This matter of purely technical mastery has always been a stumbling-block to some short-sighted minds; it is the one question in art which is most seldom viewed in its true light. Because it is necessary for a workman to be able to handle the tools of his trade deftly in the mechanical arts, some people seem to think that technical skill, even when applied to the fine arts, is something absolutely mechanical in itself. That it has its mechanical side, that a great deal of purely mechanical prac-

tice is needed to acquire it, is unquestionable. Technical skill is, in the end, nothing more than a complete command over the muscular and mental faculties necessary for the performance of this or that task. If the task is mechanical, the skill will be mechanical too; but if, on the other hand, the task is more than mechanical, then will the skill also need to be as much more than mechanical as the task is. I know that there is a too prevalent notion that many of the musical tasks Bach habitually imposed upon himself, in other words, that the musical forms in which he was fond of writing really were purely mechanical, or, as the popular phrase goes, purely mathematical. But just here is the great mistake. No musical form is, ever was, nor ever can be purely mathematical. Musical forms, like visual forms, may be mathematically computed and mathematically expressed in terms of a plus b, and x and y and so on. I have been given to understand that mathematicians will formulate for you the algebraic expression of the curve of a sea-gull's wing, or the line of beauty that runs from arm-pit to ankle in the female figure. I have little doubt that some ingenious mathematician will, in time, succeed in constructing an algebraic formula capable of being developed into the perfectly correct exposition of a four-part tonal fugue. But in art the question is not

whether visual or musical forms are mathematically computable, or even mathematically producible. The question is how they actually are produced, for what purpose, and in what spirit. Did the artist produce the visual or musical form simply for its own sake, and to show that he could do it; or did he go to work like Goethe's World-Spirit, who "sits at the whirring loom of Time, and weaves the living garment of the Godhead"? That is the question, and the whole question. Some musical forms are more complex than others, more hedged in with restrictions and conditions; the more complex they are, and the more encumbered with specific conditions, the more difficult they are to work in. I admit this freely. There are even some forms of counterpoint so complicated, so burdened with trying conditions, that no man has yet acquired the requisite technical skill to handle them freely and easily. But there are other musical forms which, although extremely complex and difficult to handle with freedom, have been thoroughly mastered. The fugue is one of these. I have heard many people complain that fugues are dry; you might say, with equal reason, that demijohns are dry—some are and some are not—it all depends upon what is in them. The fugue is an exceedingly complex musical form; it takes Fétis several folio pages to set forth

the rules for writing a fugue; these rules seem nearly endless, and every paragraph like Browning's.

> " . . . . great text in Galatians,
> Once you trip on it, entails
> Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
> One sure, if another fails."

In truth, a fugue is no child's play; to write a good one is not an easy matter. Neither is dancing on the tight-rope; you or I would cut but a sorry figure there, even if we had the luck to save our necks. But the skilled tight-rope dancer finds it easy enough; nay, more: the very rope, which makes the whole difficulty in the matter to you or me, is to him the chief source of power. Its elasticity enables him to bound into the air with a lightness and vigour such as no Taglioni could hope to emulate. Just so the fugue form, the complexities and strict requirements of which are so harassing to the tyro, becomes in its very self a source of strength to the composer who has thoroughly mastered it. And no man was ever a more complete master of the fugue, and of the other cognate forms of polyphonic composition, than Bach. That whole style of writing, of which the fugue is but one, if the highest, expression, was a second musical nature to Bach; not only he wrote in it, but he thought in it, he dreamt in it.

It was as easy and natural for him to clothe his inspiration in a polyphonic or quasi-fugal form, as it was for him to speak German. It is, to our modern apprehension, a somewhat ponderous musical mechanism. I remember when the Harvard men went to London, in the summer of 1869, to row against Oxford, how a young English oarsman, after examining the American boat and its equipments with much curiosity, asked Harry Kelly if he did not think the oars too large and heavy? "The oars are none too large," answered Kelly, "*if the men can really pull them through the water.*" Bach could really pull the fugue form through the water; where it was too ponderous for others to swing without some exertion, he could juggle with it. He did not have to follow rules; he felt and knew that all scholastic rules, even those which apply to the fugue and its cognate forms, were but more or less imperfect attempts at formulating eternal musical laws. And these laws had become such a part and parcel of his whole musical nature, that he followed them out instinctively, regardless of formulas. If a scholastic rule stood in his way, so much the worse for the rule. He knew as much more about a fugue or a canon than the scholastic rule-makers did, as Nature knows more about a tree than the botanists do. Eduard Hanslick, of Vienna, writing of the two

fugued choruses, the "*Sanctus*" and the "*Libera me,*" in Verdi's Manzoni *Requiem,* says:

"It is no wonder that an Italian opera composer who, up to his sixtieth year, had not thought of a fugue, should feel some anxiety in face of such a task, and should turn back after, say, every four measures to look at his scheme and see 'what comes next.' Most modern fugues breathe something of a similar constraint in contrast to those of Bach and Handel, which almost always reveal, even in the invention of their themes, the freedom of genius, and in their working-out, a convincing force and naturalness. The fugued style was a thoroughly natural language to those masters (as the most difficult antique metres were to many of the older poets and schools of poetry); they could think and create in it with sovereign freedom. He who thinks and invents polyphonically, as to the manner born, can write good fugues. Later the fugue shrivelled up more and more to mere formalism. . . . Even Mendelssohn, who handled the arts of learned music with greater mastery, at all events, with more clearness and charm than most modern composers, seems always to lose something of the specific gravity of his talent when he writes fully developed fugues. Mendelssohn himself said to Moritz Hauptmann, about the five-part B-flat major fugue in *St. Paul*, 'that he wrote it because people always want to hear a regular fugue in an oratorio, and think that the composer does not know how, unless he gives them one.'"

I have spoken of the fugue at such length because it represents, as a musical form, the most highly organized development of those general

principles which underlie Bach's habitual style of composition. Not that Bach was more indissolubly wedded to the fugue, as such, than his contemporaries were; for regularly constructed and developed fugues do not constitute a large proportion of his works. In his choral compositions, a fugue is rather a rarity; there is not a single one in the whole *St. Matthew-Passion.* Still, the formal plastic principles on which by far the greater part of Bach's music is based, find their highest expression in the fugue, and in just so far may this particular form be taken as characteristic of his general style. As I have said, you may not meet with a very great number of fully organized fugues in his works, but you will find that fugal elements meet you at almost every turning. Before quitting this matter of the fugue, let me quote a very instructive remark of von Bülow's, a remark which is well worthy the attention of those who persist in seeing in the fugue nothing higher than an arid formalism. Von Bülow said to me once: "It is well to notice how Beethoven in his last period, whenever he had lashed himself up to such a white heat of passion that he hardly knew where to look for adequate means of expression, almost invariably took to the fugue."

It is in the fugue, the canon, and the cognate freer polyphonic forms, that Bach's technical mas-

tery displays itself most convincingly; the very fact that he applied his astounding technique to these forms was one of the chief causes of the influence he exerted upon the subsequent development of his art. Indeed, it may truly be said that without that well-nigh total exhaustion of all the practical possibilities of musical technics which we owe to Bach, and in some measure to Bach alone, the subsequent developments the art of music has undergone at the hands of Haydn, Beethoven, Schumann, and Wagner would have been virtually impossible. It was Bach who rendered musical material so pliable that it was like wax in the hands of the great composers who came after him. And it would have been impossible for even Bach himself to achieve this conquest had he not applied his enormous technique to that style of composition which has most to do with what may, not inaptly, be called the internal structure, the very anatomy of music.

Bach was, in one sense, essentially a classicist; by this I mean that, no matter what his regard for the expressive or emotional element in music may have been, he always aimed at perfect beauty of form. Beauty of form is the chief, if not the only aim of pure classic art, and it is by their physical beauty that the classic masterpieces impress us most strongly.

I once heard James Russell Lowell say that, in looking at the Venus of Milo, he was perfectly willing to take her for her looks; he never troubled himself to ask whether she had any "views." She was perfectly beautiful and perfectly god-like, and that was enough!

It is to be noted also that classic art aims not merely at beauty of outward form, but in its best estate shows us beauty of form as immediately dependent on, and inseparable from, a perfect internal organism. So soon as classic art begins to forget this truth, you may be sure that an era of decadence and epigonic eclecticism has set in. I, too, care nothing for what "views" the Venus of Milo may have, or not have; but of one thing I am absolutely certain, she had a faultless digestion. Gibson's nymphs, on the other hand, beautiful as they are in face and figure, look as if it were not impossible for them to have a sick headache. There is much beauty of form there, but it is not the beauty that comes from a perfect organism; the nymphs have not the true eupeptic stalwartness of the best classicism. In music this perfection of organism is of even more importance as an indispensable factor of beauty of form than it is in the plastic arts. In sculpture and painting the internal organism is not revealed, but only implied, and we can judge of its perfection or faulti-

ness only by the particular sort of beauty we descry in the outward form and colour. But in music it is far otherwise; what might be called the surface of musical form is transparent; the internal structure, what I call the organism, of the composition shines through it everywhere, and the trained ear detects very quickly and surely whether the outward beauty of form is independent of, or immediately conditioned by, a finely organized construction of the whole. It may truly be said that such music as does not to some extent embody those organic structural principles which we find in Bach, has had, as a rule, but an ephemeral hold on the interest and sympathies of musicians. This is but an exemplification of the very principle of classic art of which I am now speaking. Donizetti and Bellini, the melodious exterior of whose music, beautiful as an archangel, but thinly veils the imperfect anatomy of a mollusk, are already falling into oblivion. A Bach chorus is eternal. What further developments the art has undergone since Bach's day have been in a certain sense superficial; they have, for the most part, had to do more with the external aspect, with the outward shape of music. The two great achievements of the plastic sort that we owe to composers since Bach are the establishment of the sonata form and the perfection of the song and ballad forms. No doubt much of the

music written since his day, even much of the very great music, has dispensed with a good deal of that intricate anatomy which we find pretty constantly in Bach's compositions. Still, from his time down to the present day, any tendency composers may have shown to dispense with it entirely, except in the very smallest and flimsiest forms of composition, has been pretty surely recognizable as being in the end a tendency toward a decadence.

It would seem from all this that technique was really the great lever with which Bach raised the art of composition so high that all subsequent ages have felt the influence of the mighty lift he gave it. Unquestionably Bach's astounding technique in composition was this lever; but the full extent of this technique of his can not even begin to be appreciated, if it is judged only by the feats he accomplished in his mastery over musical form. He put his technique to a higher use than the mere production of formal beauty. If he was the greatest of musical classicists, he was equally great as a musical romanticist. Beauty of musical form was, with him, not only the outcome of a perfect and highly organized musical construction, but it was also, and primarily, a means of expression. His music strikes roots deep into human life, experience, emotion, and aspiration. He did not, like the absolute classicists, value formal beauty for

its own sake alone, but meant that it should be, like the Church Sacraments, the outward sign of the inward grace. And if Bach belongs to a bygone epoch by the musical forms he employed, in this romantic phase of his genius he is essentially modern—modern as the newest and most original genius of our own day. It was in this complete union of classicism and romanticism that Bach was truly original, and stood as a new, hitherto unseen figure before the world. In no single composer have these two elements, each raised to its highest known potency, been so completely combined as they were in him. He forced the warm, vital blood of romanticism through every artery and vein of even the most complex musical organisms. No matter how intricate the structure of a composition might be, no matter what arduous technical difficulties might attend the bringing of it to formal perfection, Bach knew how to make it expressive. Listen to it with an ear that pierces through the surface, and what you hear is not the mere whirring of the cog-wheels of a highly perfected mechanism, but the very heart-beat of humanity itself. I have spoken of Bach's enormous technique in composition; it was in the use he made of this technique as a means toward the profoundest and most exalted poetic expressiveness in music that Bach laid the foundation of wellnigh all that has shown

signs of permanence in the subsequent development of the art. Herein lies the secret of the immense and far-reaching influence he exerted upon the composers who came after him. It is this complete interpenetration of the classic and romantic elements that we find in Bach, this constant application of a matchless technique to the highest artistic ends, that render the study of his works so invaluable to all musicians. It has often been said that Bach is not a good model; this is, in a certain sense, true. Bach's works properly have no place in an elementary course of musical instruction; the *Well-tempered Clavichord* is the last book I would let a pupil in fugue look into. One must have mastered a good deal in music before he is able to *learn* much from Bach. The practical study of the art of composition is very like the practical study of any other art. I once asked an experienced pianoforte-teacher what he thought of the two books of Tausig's daily exercises for the pianoforte. "Oh," said he, "Tausig's exercises were meant for pianists, not for pupils. The word *dangerous* ought to be stamped across every copy. They might lame a pupil's hand and wrist for life." Just so Bach's works in their higher sphere; problems are solved in them, of the true nature and scope of which the beginner has no notion. No man ever equalled Shakspere

in his power of using the English language; but we do not teach our children English grammar from his plays, for all that. If we did, they would probably speak the "most worstest" of English soon enough.

If Bach was essentially modern in his romanticism, he was also modern in his keen perception of the adaptability of musical means to musical ends. It has been said of Hector Berlioz that, unlike many composers, he never conceived of a musical passage as a piece of abstract form, but that a melody came to his mind not only as a certain succession of notes in a certain rhythm, but invested from the beginning with its appropriate clang-tint. When he invented a melody it was not merely a melody absolutely, but a melody for clarinet, for bassoon, for horn, for a tenor voice; form and colour were, in his mind, inseparable. We discover a very similar trait in Bach. In no composer of his day, nor before his time, does it appear that the particular instruments or voices for which he wrote played so functional a part in his inspiration. Bach seems to have drawn inspiration not only from the poetic subject he was to treat and from the musical form in which he worked, but also from the very nature of the material he employed. It was with him often as it would be with a sculptor who found his very clay inspiring.

A notable example of this is the manner in which he treated the organ.

Of all writers for the organ he best perceived wherein the essential strength of the instrument lay. He saw clearly just what the organ could do best, and what was its one virtue that was possessed by no other instrument nor body of instruments. Handel and Mendelssohn saw clearly enough what the true character and mission of the organ were; but they could not draw inspiration from this character as Bach could, and when they wrote for the organ one often feels that they might as well have written for something else. But when Bach wrote for the organ the very soul of the instrument was in him.

The one point which differentiates the organ from all other instruments is that it has no accent, no power of emphasis. Its tone is dead. True, it can be swelled or diminished, but its swell is not like the *crescendo* of a chorus or orchestra, a gradual increase of concerted personal energy, with a human heart beating harder and harder behind every successive note; it is like the growing roar of the approaching storm, an inconscient force, irresistible if you will, but wholly impersonal. Yet the swell, much as it is prized and outrageously abused by modern organists, is an item of comparatively small importance

in the organ. The prime characteristic of the instrument is its perfectly even, sustained, and impersonal tone; it never takes breath, it has no inflection. It is Bach's complete sympathy with this quality of the instrument that makes his organ works so unique. Some of his greater organ pieces have been arranged for orchestra: the Passacaglia in C minor and the Toccata in F. These arrangements have been much admired, but they seem to me very horrible. It is claimed that they give greater variety in tone-colour; so they do, and this is one reason why I object to them. This variety seems weak and trivial where it is not needed. Yet my greatest objection to these transcriptions is, after all, that the orchestra can not play them without accent, without a certain human inflection. The phrase no longer rolls out in one continuous breath; it is chopped up into rhythmic divisions which give it the triviality of human utterance, where it should ring out like a force of Nature made vocal. This succession of pigmy blows is no substitute for the steady, irresistible push of the organ tone. Some modern organists, Saint-Saëns among them, are in favour of playing Bach's fugues in a gradual *crescendo*, beginning soft and ending with the full power of the organ. The idea seems reasonable enough, for the fugue form is in itself a constant ideal

crescendo, not in physical tone, but in musical interest and excitement.

But, well as Bach understood the organ, and fully as he entered into the true spirit of the instrument, his other compositions are conceived in a totally different one. When he writes for other instruments or for voices hardly a trace of this remote, superhuman impassiveness remains. And if his organ works are great, his choral works are still greater. Here his romanticism shows itself in its full poetic vigour. Here, too, his keen perception of the adaptation of means to ends is displayed quite as forcibly, if perhaps not in quite so unique a way, as in his organ works. In his Church-cantatas, the composition of his orchestra, his choice of instruments, is almost invariably felicitous, guided by a poetic conception of the character of his subject. In his treatment of the human voice, too, he never seems to do anything at random. Take his cantatas all together, and you find that his contralto airs and recitatives have, as a rule, quite a different character from those written for a soprano voice. The character and spirit of the poetical texts are different. The same is true of the airs for tenor or for bass. Each of the four male and female voices seems to be identified in his mind with certain psychical conditions, with particular phases of religious

sentiment, and by merely reading the text of an air you can often predict what voice he will write it for. It is, upon the whole, in the Church-cantatas that we find Bach's genius displayed in its fullest power, expressiveness, variety, and poetic imaginativeness. As his music in general, viewed from a purely musical point of view, combines the highest finish and often intricacy of detail with the greatest clearness of general plan, the complex beauty of detail-work serving to adorn but never to blur the main outlines of a composition, so do we also find in his Church-cantatas that the music not only reflects the general spirit of the text, but often lends itself to the expression of the most delicate shades of emotion, to following out the text sentence by sentence and word by word.

Robert Franz writes on this point:

"In his Church works Bach calls to his aid a treatment of musical forms which is peculiar to himself. A form does not merely furnish him the means of producing a concrete picture of the idea contained in the text, but he imputes to it a special symbolical significance. He thus sublimates the traditional forms by bringing their structural plan into an immediate relation with the inner meaning of his subject. One need have no hesitation in setting up, as a general rule, that the more ingeniously complex the forms he employs are, the more surely can one count upon there being a correspondingly startling thought behind those exceptional means

of expression. A poetic perception of the sense of the text will, in general, solve the riddle quickly and surely. A multitude of instances attest the truth of this; criticism has already thrown light upon some of them, but many others are still shrouded in obscurity, which devoted study will sooner or later dispel."

No man ever had a keener sense for the picturesque, in the highest sense of the term, than Bach. He eagerly grasps every opportunity the text affords him to present a definite picture to the mind's eye; a metaphor, an historical or local allusion, a picturesque phrase, a simile, are all food for his passion for tone-painting. His music not only expresses, but, in the fullest sense, illustrates the text. This trait is noticeable in his airs and choruses as well as in his recitatives. In a chorus to the words: "They shall all come out of Sheba, bringing gold and frankincense, and singing the praise of the Lord," the music shows to the inner eye, as far as music may, a perfect picture of an Eastern caravan; you see the whole scene before you, the motley procession, drivers calling from one end of the line to the other, bells jingling on the camels' harnesses, swords gleaming in the sunlight. In another chorus to the words: "He who exalteth himself shall be humbled," the music trebles the significance of the text. I know no finer stroke of divine irony in all art, nothing

more picturesque in all poetry, than the way in which this flaunting theme struggles its way up through the compass of an octave, and then sneaks whining down again by semitones, as if with its tail between its legs. In a contralto air the words: "I stand here by the wayside and gaze yearningly after Thee," inspire him with a piece of suggestive tone-painting, unsurpassed for vividness and depth of pathos. Nothing in the whole psychical experience of man, nothing in the world we live in, lay without the pale of his sympathy. There is no tinge of asceticism in his religious sentiment; he was a true Lutheran, and to him the earth was but the road to heaven. Beauty always compelled his homage. When he sings: "Joy turns to sadness, beauty fades as a flower, the greatest strength grows weak, fortune changes with time; it is soon over with honour and glory; knowledge and all that man imagines is soon brought to naught by the grave," you feel that he is fully possessed with the solemnity of this statement of the transitoriness of all things earthly; but when he comes to the fading flower, his voice falters, and solemnity turns to tender pathos. As a writer of recitative, Bach stands pre-eminent; other later composers may have pushed recitative to more dramatic brilliancy, but in narrative and, so to speak, didactic recitative, he is the unapproached master. The

recitatives in his Church-cantatas carry more conviction with them, more spiritual admonition and exhortation, than any sermon.

But how is it then that this great man, who unites in himself all the highest powers that can fall to the lot of a composer, still stands so remote from popular appreciation? He had everything—beauty, grace, elegance, sublimity, fire, brilliancy, expressiveness; in none of these particulars has he ever been surpassed: and yet he is still virtually unknown, a sealed book to most music-lovers! The truth is all too patent, and much as we who love Bach best may kick at acknowledging it, we must in the end acknowledge that there is no probability of his ever becoming popular. He speaks an obsolete idiom; the Latin of Virgil and the Greek of Homer are not more dead than Bach's musical language; the tragedies of Æschylus are not more foreign to the habits of the modern stage than the style of Bach's music is to that of our day. And music can not be translated as Greek and Latin can. The difficulty the average music-lover experiences in seeing through Bach's music is great; all in it is so unaccustomed. The old outcry of lack of melody comes up on every hand; but, in honest truth, not to find melody in Bach is like not being able to see the wood because of the trees that are there. True, the perception of melody,

the understanding of musical form, no matter how unaccustomed, can come with habituation. But the means of habituating the public to Bach's music, especially to his great cantatas, are almost hopelessly beyond our reach. These cantatas are terribly difficult; the airs, in particular, are almost impossible to singers to-day. The mere vocal executive power they require, although often unquestionably great, is not excessive. Things of equal technical difficulty are still sung quite fluently. The real difficulty is more intellectual and artistic, in the higher sense, than technical. Few singers to-day are in better condition thoroughly to understand an air by Bach than the public itself is; and they have no traditions to guide them, as they have in Handel's case—not even bad ones. Then comes the whole vexed question of "additional accompaniments," of how the many gaps Bach, like Handel, left in the orchestral part of his scores are to be filled out. Let it be enough for me merely to hint at this difficulty here; to discuss it would lead me too far.

Added to these difficulties, which make a satisfactory performance of Bach's choral works problematical to-day, the public has to face one of another sort, one which touches itself only. This is the great difficulty of listening to music in an un-

accustomed and often exceedingly intricate style intelligently, and in the right way. In this matter, as elsewhere, Robert Franz is the best guide. He writes :

"To my mind it is far less important with Bach (*i.e.*, in his choruses) to follow out the web of voices in all its details : as, in a cathedral, the countless details of ornamentation only serve to impart life and movement to the whole, but do not distract the spectator's attention therefrom, so is it also with Bach's polyphonic writing. Bach's harmonic progressions unfold themselves, for the most part, in large, broad proportions,—his fundamental basses point to this clearly enough,—but he seems to resolve these groups into smaller ones by a melodically flowing leading of the voices, which gives rise to a multitude of subsidiary harmonies that busily push their way hither and thither. Now, he who should try to follow these smaller groups, as they flit rapidly by, would come to grief, for the reason that before one of them has acquired a complete, well-rounded form, another is already pushing its way to the front, only to give place just as quickly to a third, so that all these separate details seem to elude the ear. The true significance of the detail-work, as of the whole, is lost when one listens to Bach in this fashion. One should far rather seek to grasp those larger proportions, try to reconstruct them inwardly for one's self, and thus learn to look from this firm basis securely and intelligently into the apparently entangled, but really highly ingenious and organically developed labyrinth of the several voices. Then will those details in which the centre of gravity lies, which have the decisive word to say, and are the chief exponents of the composer's artistic intention, stand out in all due promi-

nence of themselves; and all that is merely auxiliary, and that tends but to add elegance and finish of style to the musical form, will no longer disturb nor mislead. The secret of Bach's leading of the voices resides in the close relation each separate voice bears to the whole; consequently the understanding must first of all keep in view the development of the whole, and, through this, seek to find its bearings amidst the throng of minor details. Even the musician can not safely leave this out of consideration in his most exhaustive study of a work down to its minutest details."

The student who is anxious to practise this sort of listening to Bach, recommended by Franz, will find the hardest part of the work done for him, so to say, in one of the composer's instrumental works: in the C major concerto for three clavichords with string accompaniment. Hardly anything, even by Bach, is richer in minute florid detail-work than this concerto; but leave aside the three clavichord parts, and play (if possible, a good pianoforte arrangement of) the string accompaniment by itself, and the main outlines of the music stand before you unobscured. And here I come to the best and most fruitful means of initiation into the sacred mysteries of Bach's art, for such initiation can hardly be looked for in concert-halls. Take Bach home with you and commune with him there over your own pianoforte; study him with loving diligence, taking first what happens most to strike your personal fancy,—for even in Bach

there are some things which almost any one can like,—and thus habituate yourself to his style. I know of no finer, deeper, nor higher musical education. In a word, sweeping as the statement may seem, I make it circumspectly and with complete conviction, that there is no more trustworthy gauge of a man's musical nature and culture than his appreciation and love for Bach. In him you find what is highest, noblest, and best in music; and, furthermore, it is through him that the other great composers are best to be appreciated. A devotee of Beethoven who ignores Bach is a suspicious person to me; I do not believe he sees half the greatness of Beethoven. A Wagner worshipper, who calls the *Well-tempered Clavichord* dry and antiquated, is no true Wagnerian. I once asked a man, coming out from a concert which ended with a stirring chorus by Bach: "Well, how do you feel after that last chorus?" He replied: "I have come to the conclusion that some people are born to enjoy Bach, and others are not. I was not!" I might have answered back that some people were born musical, and others could not have musicianship thrust upon them. But I held my peace and said nothing.

ADDITIONAL ACCOMPANIMENTS TO BACH'S AND HANDEL'S SCORES

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Der Stoff gewinnt erst seinen Werth
Durch künstlerische Gestaltung.
—HEINRICH HEINE, *Schöpfungslieder.*

IT is both fortunate and unfortunate that people in general have fallen into the habit of regarding Bach and Handel with a rather careless admiration. Those great names are too often treated with mere after-dinner-speech complacency. This is fortunate in so far as the admiration, if careless and of somewhat second-hand quality, is after all respectful, and offers no opposition to whatever serious attempts may be made toward doing real honour to the great composers' works; unfortunate, as it tends to induce a too lukewarm interest in the painstaking study of what is most to be cherished in the rich legacy bequeathed to the world by Bach and Handel, without which study our appreciation of its worth is unintelligent and undiscriminating.

Although the astounding development purely instrumental music has undergone at the hands of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and others may seem to throw the instrumental works of Bach and Handel into the shade, it must be recognized that in the department of vocal composition the world has produced very little that can bear comparison with their monumental oratorios and cantatas. It seems strange at first sight that, while we can bring about an excellent performance of so huge a score as Berlioz's Danrémont *Requiem*, with its four supplementary orchestras of brass instruments, eight pairs of kettle-drums, and all its imposing vocal and orchestral panoply, we stand comparatively impotent before so apparently simple a work as Handel's *Athalia*. In the former case it is a mere question of good-will, orchestral resources, and money; in the latter, a question of something far more difficult to procure.

In looking over the pages of a Bach or Handel score we are struck at once with the apparent meagreness of the instrumental portion. While the voices are treated with all the elaborate care characteristic of the composers' day, the instrumental part seems to have been unaccountably neglected. In some places the orchestral accompaniment is worked out with the same elaborateness as the voice-parts; in others we find little or no-

thing more than an instrumental bass to support the voices. But on closer inspection we find that this bass is in many cases accompanied by a curious series of Arabic numerals, which were evidently not put there for nothing. In fact, both Bach and Handel were in the habit of writing a great part of their music in that species of short-hand known to the initiated as a figured bass. Wherever there seems to be a lack of instrumental accompaniment in their scores we may be sure that the bass contains the germ from which it is to be developed. This bass is called the *continuo* or *basso continuo;* and until it is developed into full harmony, until the frequent gaps in the score are filled out, anything like an adequate performance of the work is out of the question. In the composers' time this filling-out was probably done by themselves, or under their direction, on the organ or harpsichord. The organist played either directly from the *continuo* itself or from an organ-part prepared from it. Passages which the composer did not intend to be played in full harmony were marked "*tasto solo;*" the other portions were often elaborately figured, that is, the harmony was indicated by figures written under the *continuo*. In many instances the figuring was omitted, the choice of harmony being then far more problematical. It is generally supposed that in such cases the composer

meant to play the organ himself, or else that, although the figuring is not to be found in the score, it was written down by the composer in the separate part from which the organist was to play, and has since been lost.

It will easily be seen that the manner in which Bach's and Handel's *continuos* are worked out is by no means a matter of indifference, inasmuch as a very vital and essential element in their music depends thereon. The subject has given rise to much discussion, which has to-day assumed the proportions of an actual pen-and-ink war. Musician after musician has tried his hand at working out the *continuo* in scores by the old masters, with very varying success. To distinguish those parts which were actually written out by the composers themselves from the indispensable additions made to the score by other hands, the former are called "original parts;" the latter are generally known by the name of "additional accompaniments." The violence of the discussion on the subject of additional accompaniments now going on in Germany, and its direct bearing upon the all-important problem of how to insure an adequate performance of Bach's and Handel's vocal works, make it interesting to see how the two present contending parties arose.

It should be borne in mind that, in so far as the

familiarity of the public with Bach's works is concerned, Sebastian Bach is practically a more modern composer even than Beethoven. That is, the public recognition of his works is of more recent date. For a long period, during which the works of Haydn and Mozart had become familiar as household words, and Beethoven — yes, even Weber, Mendelssohn, and Schumann—was very generally known and admired, Sebastian Bach was known only by name, save to a few choice spirits. Organists knew his organ works, and his *Well-tempered Clavichord* had been studied by musicians; but his oratorios and cantatas were all but unheard of.

How hard Mendelssohn and one or two other men worked to bring the public at large into direct relations with some of Bach's more important compositions is well known. The task was a severe one, as nearly all of Bach's vocal works existed only in manuscript. Mendelssohn succeeded, however, in having the *St. Matthew-Passion* brought out at the Berlin Sing-Akademie, and later in the Thomas-Kirche in Leipzig, the very church in which Bach himself had held the position of organist, and in bringing one or two of his orchestral suites to performance at the Gewandhaus. The annual performance of the *Passion* on Good Friday soon grew to be a fixed institution; a large portion

of the public all over North Germany got to regard this work with peculiar veneration. The *St. John-Passion* was also given annually at another church, the Pauliner-Kirche, but was not so generally admired as its mighty companion. The Gewandhaus orchestra continued playing the D minor suite, more as a matter of routine than anything else, for their audiences were hugely bored by it.

The fruits of Mendelssohn's strenuous endeavours in the cause of Bach were practically limited to this. Few persons knew, and still fewer cared, about the existence of some three hundred Church-cantatas from the great master's pen; surely very few indeed suspected the fact that these cantatas were one of the most precious mines of musical riches the world ever possessed. It was not until some time after Mendelssohn's death that the world at large began to learn anything about them.

With Handel the case was somewhat different. Although his works have never, to this day, won anything like general popularity in Germany, the few musicians and musical *savants* who were interested in Handel took more active measures to have his oratorios publicly performed than the Bach-lovers did, on their side; witness the preponderance of Handel's vocal works, which had been supplied with additional accompaniments,

over works by Bach for which similar things had been done in Mendelssohn's time. Several completed scores of Handel (made by Mozart, Mosel, and others) were ready for use by choral societies, whereas almost nothing by Bach existed in a performable shape. The violent discussions between "*Bachianer*" and "*Händelianer*," about which the world has since heard a good deal, interested only the parties actively engaged in them; the outside world cared nothing whatever about the whole question. Indeed it was hardly possible that any general enthusiasm should be felt on the subject at a time when new works by Mendelssohn and Schumann were continually making appeals to public interest, when Weber was occupying every one's attention, and Richard Wagner was already beginning to stir up all the musical elements in Germany into astonished, chaotic strife with his operas and theoretical pamphlets.

Yet the true Bach and Handel-lovers were not idle. Three years after Mendelssohn's death several musicians and men interested in the cause came together in Leipzig, to debate upon the practicability of publishing a complete edition of the works of Johann Sebastian Bach. They decided that this undertaking could be carried out only by subscription, as the demand for such music in the market was virtually null. Accordingly the now

well-known Bach Society[1] was formed, the chief founders of which were C. F. Becker, the firm of Breitkopf & Härtel, Moritz Hauptman, Otto Jahn, and Robert Schumann. The edition was to be published by Breitkopf & Härtel. The matter must have been taken up with a good deal of energy, for on July 28, 1850—the centennial anniversary of Bach's death—an official circular soliciting subscriptions was sent out over Germany. Subscriptions came in quite rapidly, and among a host of names on the list we find especially prominent those of Franz Liszt, Ignaz Moscheles, Louis Spohr, and A. B. Marx. The first volume, containing ten Church-cantatas in score, appeared in December, 1851. A list of the then existing subscribers, classified according to their places of residence, was printed with the volume. It is not uninteresting to note in this list, under the head "Boston," the single American name "*Herr Parker, J. C. D., Tonkünstler.*" The society has since then continued publishing volume after volume, and the edition has at the present date reached its twenty-fourth volume.[2] But, in spite

[1] This Deutsche Bach-Gesellschaft (German Bach Society), which today counts among its members distinguished musicians and music-lovers all over Europe and in many parts of America, must not be confounded with the Leipziger Bach-Verein (Bach Association), a totally distinct society, which was organized much later.

[2] This was in 1878; the edition now, in 1894, comprises forty volumes.

of these labours of the Bach Society, which were, after all, prompted quite as much by an archæologico-historical as by a purely musical interest in Bach's works, the general love for Bach kept pretty much *in statu quo.*

Some years after the appearance of the Bach circular another organization, the Handel Society, was formed, for the purpose of publishing a complete edition of Handel's works. It was conducted on precisely the same principles, with one exception, as the other body, and its edition was published by the same firm. The first volume, containing the dramatic oratorio of *Susannah,* appeared in October, 1858. That a somewhat more vital musical interest in its task was felt by this organization than by its fellow society is evident from the fact that, in its edition, all the scores of Handel's vocal works are accompanied with a written-out part for organ or pianoforte, in which the bare places in the score are filled out according to the figured *basso continuo.* In the Bach edition there is nothing of the sort, but only the incomplete score, just as the composer left it. Thus, while the Bach Society gave to the world an edition of that master's works which was historically valuable, and only that, in so far as the vocal scores were concerned, the Handel Society took active measures to make the vocal scores in its edi-

tion available for actual performance by choral bodies.

The champion of the latter society was Friedrich Chrysander, a man who had always assumed the attitude of an almost exclusive admirer of Handel, and in his writings seldom let slip a chance of saying something invidious about Bach. Chrysander had somewhat more prestige as a musical authority than any one on the Bach side. Another man was G. G. Gervinus, who, although not a musician, had somehow got bitten with the Handel mania, and allowed his Handel-worship to expand into all the implacable bigotry of an amateur. As most of Handel's vocal works were originally written to English words, Gervinus was of no slight service to the Handel Society in supplying it with German translations for its edition. That an eminent *littérateur* like Gervinus should have been willing to wade through the unspeakable balderdash of many of the texts of Handel's oratorios, and diligently turn it into rhymed German, is a good earnest of the strength of his enthusiasm. The most prominent Bachite was Philipp Spitta, a schoolmaster in Eisenach. As Chrysander had the peculiar failing of not being able to keep himself from defaming Bach, Spitta could never be dissuaded from indulging in similar flings at Handel; so the two men were continually at

swords' (or pens') points. Their animosity reached its climax when Spitta came to Leipzig, a few years ago, to deliver a course of lectures on Bach. How long this state of affairs might have lasted, had not a third element been introduced into the discussion, were hard to tell. But a third element was very soon introduced in the person of Robert Franz.

Franz had, for some time past, been attracting considerable attention by his additional accompaniments to several scores of Bach, Handel, Durante, and Astorga. Now Chrysander rather felt as if he himself, the noted biographer of Handel, and one of the most influential members of the Handel Society, had, or ought to have, something like a monopoly of knowledge on the subject of filling out Handel's *continuos;* in like manner Spitta felt that he, the biographer of Bach, and well-known Bach-student, knew all that was to be known about writing additional accompaniments to Bach's scores. About the manner in which this was to be done both men essentially agreed, if in nothing else. Now Franz believed that he, although neither archæological pedant, necrologist, nor schoolmaster, but merely a hard Bach and Handel student and a highly cultivated musician with a decided spark of genius, knew somewhat more about the artistic side of his favourite masters than

either Chrysander or Spitta, who, with all their labour, may be said to have sounded those mighty heads only wig-deep at best. He also showed in his work that he differed widely with Chrysander and Spitta on some very vital and essential points. So he came in for a sound rating—through the medium of printer's ink—from both these literary lights. But Franz, although naturally the most modest and inoffensive mortal alive, was not the man to shirk an encounter in which the honour of Bach and Handel was at stake; being, moreover, a man of no mean literary ability, he answered back, calmly but firmly, and with such effect that his opponents' wrath fairly reached the boiling-over point. There was plainly nothing for it but to make common cause against the common enemy.

Accordingly, Chrysander and Spitta shook hands, swearing eternal alliance; *Bachianer* and *Händelianer* fused, as the politicians say. The Leipziger Bach-Verein (Leipzig Bach Association) was formed on the most violent anti-Franz principles. This association had for its object not only the editing many of Bach's choral works in pianoforte and vocal score, with a complete accompaniment worked out from Bach's figured *continuo*, to be used whenever the works in question were performed, but also the public performance of these works by the best choral and orchestral

forces Leipzig afforded. So the pen-and-ink war was no longer between *Bachianer* and *Händelianer*, about which of the two was the greater man,—a rather foolish bone of contention at best,—but between Robert Franz and the Leipzig Bach Association, as to the manner in which the necessary additional accompaniments to Bach's and Handel's vocal scores should be written.

The contest, as has been said, has by this time got to be a particularly fierce one, both parties indulging themselves in personalities and mutual recriminations to a lamentable extent, Julius Schaeffer, for instance, assuring Dr. Chrysander that his additional accompaniments "sound quite as badly on the clavichord as on the pianoforte," and the opposite party hitting back with even greater frankness. Be it said, however, that, in so far as concerns Franz personally, he has expressed himself with noble moderation in all he has written. The most notable sympathizers with either party are, on the Franz side, Julius Schaeffer (who may be regarded as Franz's semi-official mouthpiece), Joseph Rheinberger, and Franz Liszt; on the side of the Bach Association, Johannes Brahms, Joseph Joachim, and several others. The Bach Association represents the conservative, archæologico-historical element, Franz the progressive, artistic one. There seems to exist a considerable di-

vergence of opinion on many points among some of the influential members of the Bach Association itself; one of them, Franz Wüllner, may be regarded as to all intents and purposes a sympathizer with Robert Franz. In his additional accompaniments to the cantata, *Jesu, der du meine Seele,* he has followed Franz's method in many essential points. How it happens that the Bach Association could allow this arrangement to be embodied in its edition is not quite clear. There are also many prominent musicians who sympathize wholly with Franz, but take no active part in the controversy. The first publication of the Bach Association appeared in 1876. It comprised the cantatas *Sie werden aus Saba Alle kommen,* arranged by A. Volkland; *Wer Dank opfert, der preiset mich,* arranged by H. von Herzogenberg; and *Jesu, der du meine Seele,* arranged by Franz Wüllner.

Having thus seen how the famous Bach and Handel controversy arose, it is now time for us to examine into its merits.

The question of how additional accompaniments to Bach's and Handel's scores are to be written is really a double one. The first and more important is, in what style the filling-out of the figured (or unfigured) *continuo* is to be done; the second, less important one, on what instrument, or instruments, the added parts are to be played. This second

question seems of easy solution at first sight; the almost universally accepted tradition being that the composers themselves used the organ, in some cases the harpsichord or clavichord. But there is some difficulty in the matter, notwithstanding.

The majority of Handel's vocal works are either concert compositions or else operas, which the enormous change in the art of dramatic writing since his time has driven from the stage, and our modern taste can find acceptable only in the concert-room. Bach wrote mainly for the Church; but the altered fashions of our day make the availableness of his Church-cantatas for purposes of divine worship very questionable; at all events, they could be used only in the German Lutheran service. Bach's oratorios and cantatas come to-day as much within the domain of the concert-room as Handel's vocal works. Now, the number of concert-halls in the world that possess an organ is exceedingly limited,[1] so that the enforced use of an organ in these scores would shut the doors of many choral societies upon them at once. But more of this further on. Let us first consider the more important and vital question—How is the figured *continuo* to be worked out?

There are many opinions on the subject; but that something needs to be done, even in those

[1] This was more true in 1878 than it is now.

scores where there is no figuring under the *continuo,* is agreed by every one. Bach and Handel never showed the faintest symptoms of deeming a melody and bass all that was needful in music. Jean-Jacques Rousseau advocated this strange theory, saying that the truly æsthetic ear takes more pleasure in divining the harmony in a composition than in actually hearing it; but Bach and Handel had minds of another stamp.

Some persons are of the opinion that, in working out these masters' figured (or unfigured) basses, "the greatest possible *neutrality* in the filling-out" should be observed; in other words, the additions should be as inconspicuous as possible. These are the archæological extremists. Others have felt less scruples, saying that one need only have a clear insight into the A B C of the matter (that is, of writing harmony to a figured bass, or, as it was called in Handel's time,—mark the expression,—the *art of accompanying*) to do all that is required in any case; that every musician, even tolerably skilful amateurs, can not fail to find the right path and walk securely therein.

What the "greatest possible neutrality" in the filling-out means is not hard to guess. It evidently means that the figured *continuo* should be filled out in plain harmony—what the French call *accords plaqués.* Now one thing is clear: if this

added harmony is to be "neutral," it must be neither actively consonant nor discrepant with the spirit of the original parts, instrumental or vocal, written by the composer; it must neither help nor hinder them; it must have no individuality of its own; in short, it must be a sort of musical *tertium quid*, not very easy to define. It is a little strange, however, that we may look through all Bach's and Handel's vocal works without finding an instance of *their* having treated a single item in their compositions as "neutral." On the contrary, every voice, every orchestral part, is instinct with life, every instrument has something to say. It may be retorted with some show of speciousness that, admitting this musical vitality to be found in everything Bach and Handel *actually wrote out*, there is no direct evidence that they intended their mere figured basses to indicate anything of the sort; and that, if they had intended the gaps in their scores to be filled out in a polyphonic style—that is, in a style in which every part is vitally important—they would not have left the gaps there at all, but would have filled them out themselves. Of direct evidence in this matter there is naturally none, or the question could never have come up; but the circumstantial and internal evidence is very strong.

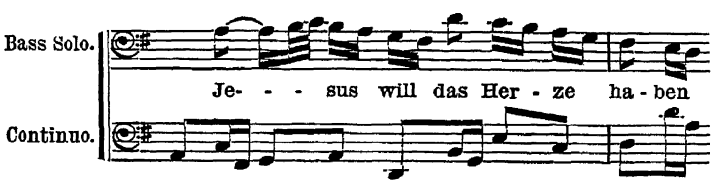
In the first place, the style of writing in which

certain instrumental parts are used merely to form a plain harmonic background for other parts, treated in a flowing polyphonic style, is foreign to the spirit of Bach's day. This style can not be traced farther back than Mozart, Haydn, and Gluck. Bach and Handel may be said to have lived in an essentially polyphonic age; in a time when all that was not structurally essential in music was looked upon as superfluous, and hence inadmissible. To understand why they should have been content merely to indicate certain things in their scores, and in a way open to great latitude of interpretation, too, we must understand something of the musical habits and customs of their day. At that period the "art of accompanying" did not mean the art of playing or conducting an already elaborated instrumental accompaniment to one or more singers or solo-players; it meant the art of deciphering—either at sight, or after some practice—a figured bass on the organ or harpsichord. This art was very generally cultivated, and no one was considered a competent organist or clavecinist who had not attained to a high degree of proficiency in it. More than this, an organist was expected to be able not only to decipher a figured bass correctly and freely at sight, but to improvise contrapuntally on a given theme. A significant fact in this connection is that we

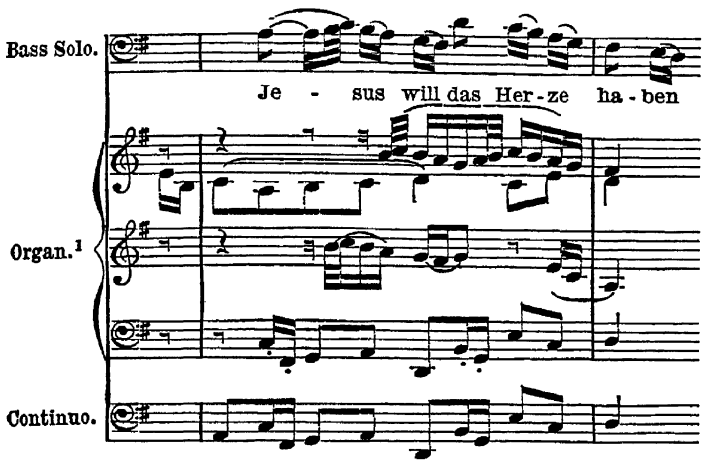
find that certain famous singers in London stipulated especially, in their contracts with managers, "that Mr. Handel should play the accompaniments;" that is, that he should preside at the harpsichord or organ, and decipher the figured *continuo*. Now it is hardly likely that, at a time when there were so many instrumental virtuosi in London, such stress should have been laid on Handel's accompanying, if it had been only a question of keyboard technique. No, it was because Handel filled out a figured bass better than other artists. Had this filling-out to be done merely in correct plain harmony (*accords plaqués*) there would have been but a small chance of Handel's shining perceptibly superior to other players at a time when the next best organist was perfectly competent to do as much; but, if the *continuo* was to be worked out in a pure polyphonic style, in imitative counterpoint, we see at once how Handel might easily have distanced less gifted and experienced virtuosi than himself. Indeed, it is reported that to hear Handel or Bach play from a figured bass was like listening to a brilliant organ concerto.

In the next place, we find by experiment that in very many cases the effect of mere plain harmony (*accords plaqués*) in conjunction with the parts actually written out by Bach and Handel is un-

satisfactory, if not downright bad. The contrast between Bach's and Handel's freely moving parts, so full of glorious life and vigour, and the heavy, sluggish chords is too marked; the "accompaniment" hangs like a millstone round the neck of the brilliant counterpoint, or else so muffles and chokes it that it loses half its charm. It is like filling out the space between the beautiful head and limbs of some fragmentary antique statue with mere shapeless ashlar; the head and limbs do better without it. There are even passages which absolutely defy simple harmonic treatment. Take, for example, the following measure from the bass air in Bach's cantata, *Sie werden aus Saba Alle kommen:*



Try to fill out the accompaniment in plain chords, and see what the effect will be. Franz evidently felt this difficulty when he wrote it out as seen on following page.

Were it worth while, I might also quote the Bach Association version of this measure, which

Schaeffer has very justly characterized as sheer harmonic nonsense.

Franz is clearly right when he says that the "greatest possible neutrality" in the filling-out must necessarily lead to a want of character. A mere harmonic "accompaniment" will be irksomely conspicuous by reason of its very neutrality. Even the Bach Association has found it impossible to adhere exclusively to this principle, and the coworkers of the Handel Society have found its unstinted application equally out of the question. A vital polyphonic style is requisite, and through it alone can the gaps in Bach's and Handel's scores be so filled out that the contrast

[1] Two manuals and pedal, with contrasted stops in the manuals.

between the original parts and the additional accompaniments shall not strike the ear as ungraceful and unmusical.

The truth of this was most clearly perceived by the greatest, and virtually the first, musician who tried his hand at filling out an incomplete score; a man whose name carries such weight with it that the present archæologico-historical party have always carefully omitted it from their discussions. I mean Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. In his time the mighty question of additional accompaniments had not set so many wise and foolish heads wagging as it has since. In working out the scores of Handel's *Messiah* and *Alexander's Feast,* he had only the dictates of his own fine musical instinct to follow. The style in which he completed the orchestral parts to the airs, "O thou, that tellest good tidings to Zion," and "The people that walked in darkness," is to be looked upon as a model for all such work. It is curious to note how differently the Leipzig historical party face, on the one hand, a discussion that deals with mere abstractions, and, on the other, a definite musical fact—especially when the latter is backed up by the prestige of a great name. In the former case they are bold as lions; in the latter, *Mum 's the word!* What explanation can be offered of the very singular fact that, among the thirty-eight

volumes[1] of Handel's works already published by the German Handel Society, the *Messiah* is not to be found? Does it not seem as though Messrs. Chrysander & Co. felt that an accompaniment to the *Messiah*, written out on their plan, could not stand in face of Mozart's score; and that to embody a pianoforte or organ transcription of Mozart's score in their edition would be tacitly to deny the soundness of their principles? The fact that there is much that is incomplete, and even otherwise unsatisfactory, in Mozart's score[2] is not worth a jot, seeing that in just those passages where Mozart has been most successful in making his additions blend harmoniously with both the letter and spirit of the original parts, so that both Handel's work and his own seem to have sprung from the same source, in the two airs just mentioned he has worked out the *continuo* in the very freest and most elaborate contrapuntal style.

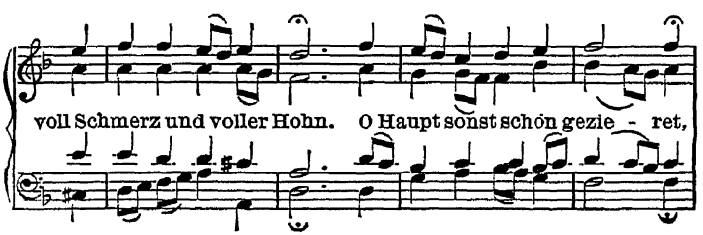
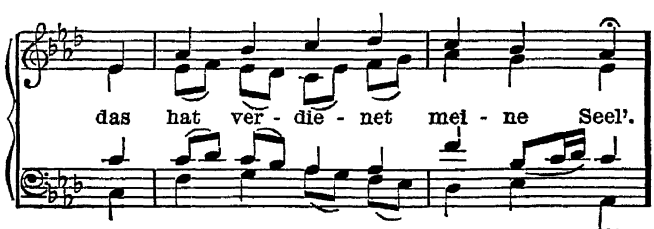
In so far as a clear insight into the A B C of the matter is concerned, it is not hard to see that this is quite too flippant a way of settling a very

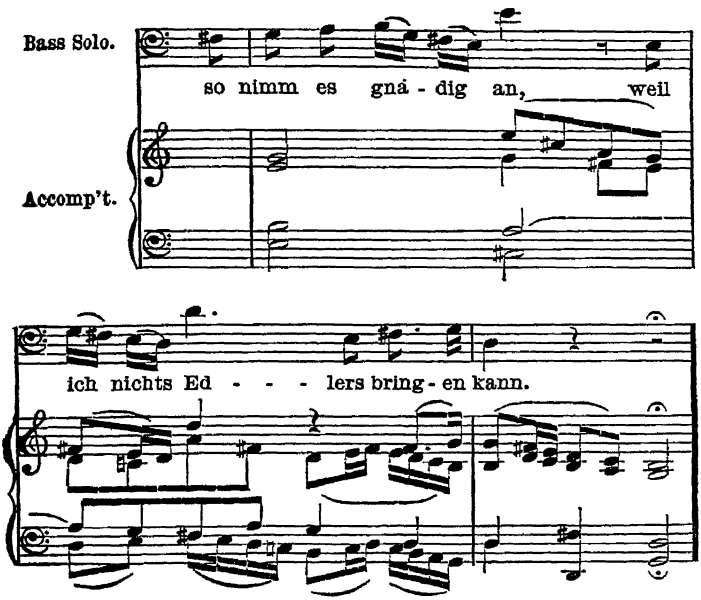
[1] Now (1894) seventy-five volumes.

[2] Mozart's MS. of the *Messiah* has been lost. But, since the present essay was written, it has been established, almost beyond a doubt, that a good deal in the additional accompaniments in the published score attributed to him came from some other hand. The internal evidence points strongly this way; there are some passages in the published score (take, for instance, in the alto air, "He was despised") which no musician of Mozart's kidney *could have written.*

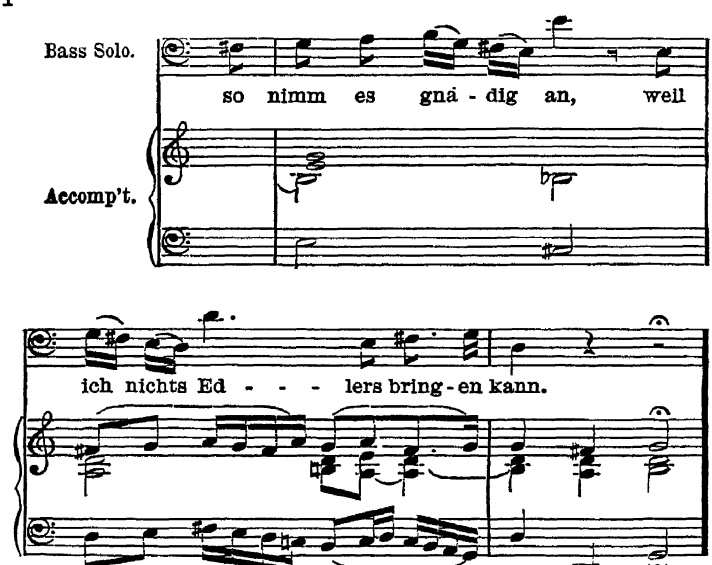
grave question. Franz holds with perfect justice, and it can not be said too often nor too emphatically, that additional accompaniments are quite as capable of weakening and distorting the original as of ennobling and adorning it. Verily the task of filling out Bach's and Handel's vocal scores adequately is not one to which the musical tyro, nor even the merely learned contrapuntist, can safely feel himself equal. To the modern musician, brought up in the midst of music of a post-Handelian age, and strongly imbued with the artistic tendencies of our day, it is the most difficult task in the whole range of composition. I say this circumspectly, and with full conviction. Let me repeat here that, unless Bach's and Handel's figured, or unfigured, *continuos* are adequately worked out, their vocal works are in no fit condition for performance; let it be understood most distinctly that to perform such compositions simply from the original parts, and without additional accompaniments of some sort, is to commit the greatest conceivable act of stupid unfaithfulness; it is presenting the works of these masters in the one light which we may be positively sure is totally wrong.

But, to go on with our subject. The fact that the entirely free, melodious, and expressive movement of every part in the harmony was one of the prime characteristics of Bach's style, even when

nothing like fugued writing was in question, seems to have escaped the notice of many of his arrangers. Yet this is not only an evidence of Bach's supreme skill in polyphonic writing, it is one of the means by which he gave expression to some of his finest and most poetic inspirations. Technically speaking, the bass, with him, contained the germ from which a composition was to be evolved, rather than that part which we, in modern parlance, call the melody. Of all parts lying above the bass, the "melody" was, at best, *primus inter pares*. In his vocal works, where the music naturally strives to express the sentiment of the text, we often find that the poetic and expressive essence of the music lies in the middle parts (alto or tenor), or in the orchestral portion. This is peculiarly noteworthy in his chorals, where the middle voices move with the most absolute freedom, and nothing of that timidly restricted leading of the parts advocated in elementary manuals of harmony is to be found. Take, for instance, the following passages in the choral, "*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden:*"

What a plenitude of grief the tenor brings into the harmony at the word *Schmerz* (grief)! What can be more expressive of mental anguish than the suspended E in the tenor, making, as it does, the grating dissonance of the minor 2nd with the upper voice? In the next phrase, "O Head, once beautifully adorned," the wondrous glow of light, shining like a halo round the divine head, at the word *gezieret*, is due wholly to the leading of the alto and tenor voices. Again in the choral, "*Ich bin's, ich sollte büssen*" (the melody of which is commonly known as "*Nun ruhen alle Wälder*"), where the last two verses are: "The scourging and the bonds Thou hast undergone, them has my soul deserved," with what loving, sorrowful penitence is the tenor voice instinct in the last line!

Franz has given abundant proof of his thorough appreciation of this characteristic of Bach's style. Of his skill in reproducing such effects—*effects* is an unpleasant word, but let it pass—the following passage from his arrangement of the *Saba*-cantata

is a fine example. The words are: "So accept it (*i. e.* my heart) graciously, since I can bring nothing nobler."

Here Franz had only the voice-part and the bass (this time unfigured) to work from; but what an admirable piece of work he has made of it! It sounds as if Bach himself had written it. How joyfully the accompaniment soars up at "accept it graciously," and how humbly it bows down to prepare for the words "since I can bring nothing nobler!" How full of reposeful trust in the ac-

ceptance of the offering is the descending closing cadence!

I have hinted that the Bach Association arrangers, and some others, too, had sounded Bach's head only wig-deep; as for diving down to the great, bounteously loving *heart* of him, so full of tender piety and childlike trust, that seems to have lain as far as possible from their thoughts. See, for instance, what A. Volkland makes of the passage last quoted from the *Saba*-cantata, and compare his version with Franz's:

Compared with Franz's free, buoyant leading of the parts, how timidly and awkwardly the upper

voice in Volkland's accompaniment moves about within the close limits of a minor 3rd ; and that diminished 7th chord on C-sharp in the first measure,—it sounds as if the suppliant were performing some painful surgical operation upon his heart, or else invoking the powers of darkness,—how its melo-dramatic strenuousness contrasts with the quieter dignity of Franz's 6-5 chord, not to speak of the cross-relation Volkland's B-flat makes with the immediately preceding B-natural in Bach's voice-part ! And, upon the whole, do not the two arrangements differ from each other as the work of the complete artist does from that of the bungler ?

Concerning the mere grammatical errors (*Schulfehler*), such as rank 5ths and octaves, hideous harmonic progressions, and what not, made by men of no mean repute as musicians, in filling out Bach's and Handel's *continuos,* things that would expose any pupil in a harmony class to summary correction, I can only refer the reader to the thirty-second volume of the Handel Society, containing the famous Italian Chamber Duets and Trios, with accompaniments worked out by Johannes Brahms and Joseph Joachim, and to the Bach Association edition of the cantata *Wer Dank opfert, der preiset mich,*[1] with the accompaniment arranged

[1] Published by Rieter-Biedermann : Leipzig and Winterthur, 1876.

by H. von Herzogenberg. Both of these publications give one ample food for serious meditation on the condition of the Art of Music at the present day.

Having discussed the manner in which additional accompaniments to Bach's and Handel's scores are to be written, the next question is, on what instrument, or instruments, are they to be played ? Difficult of solution as the first question was, this one is still more so ; indeed, it has not yet been solved to the complete satisfaction of any one.

If we look at the matter from a purely historical point of view, the fact stares us in the face that, in all probability, Bach and Handel themselves used the organ and harpsichord (or clavichord). So far as the latter instruments are concerned, the tone of the pianoforte (the modern substitute for the harpsichord or clavichord), in combination with the orchestra, the contrast between its cold, *quasi-staccato* notes and the warm sustained tones of the voices and other instruments, is peculiarly ungrateful to the modern ear ; so much so that anything more than a very sparing use of it is to be deprecated. For let us not lose sight of the fact that, in filling out old scores, the chief desideratum is to preserve the *spirit* of the original works, which is in general far more dependent upon purity of musical outline than upon mere effects of clang-tint. In

this particular Bach's and Handel's works differ diametrically from the greater part of the music of the present day, which is to an overweening extent dependent on the sheer physical (what Hanslick calls the *pathological*) effect of strongly contrasted, harsh, mellow, powerful, or sensuous qualities of sound. If archæological accuracy were the sole object in view, the pianoforte, or even the old harpsichord or spinet, might certainly be largely employed for purposes of accompaniment; but this would result in many cases in a mere quaintness of sonority (to our ears) utterly at variance with the intent of the music. What we should have most at heart is to enable the music to produce, as far as practicable, the same effect upon *our organization* that it did upon the listener of the day when it was written. Who would wish the broad stripes of bright paint restored, which antiquaries tell us once adorned the Ægina marbles? What æsthetic end would be gained thereby? The use of the pianoforte in Bach and Handel scores would be a piece of historical accuracy of much the same artistic value.

As for the use of the organ, I will only give some significant facts. The historical party are naturally in favour of the organ, and of the organ only, in cases where the clavichord is not to be used; their claim to the title of *historical party*

rests mainly on this preference. That Bach and Handel used the organ is not to be questioned; but where, when, how, and how much they used it is by no means so certain. In Bach's case it is not even certain why he used it; that is, whether he used it wholly from preference, or in part from necessity. Bach wrote his Church-cantatas at very short intervals, often one a week, and copied out many of the parts himself. It is easily conceivable that he may often have been hard-pressed for time, and took to the makeshift of a figured bass, to be filled out by himself at the organ, simply to save time. His well-known lack of proper orchestral resources may have been an additional reason. The following quotation from the preface to the first volume of the Bach Society throws some light upon this matter.

"While Handel brought out his sacred compositions by means of elaborate concert performances, with the best-drilled executants, in a metropolis where a numerous public was interested to pass judgment upon them, S. Bach [1] wrote solely for the church-service, and had at his disposal but very limited means of performing his music for Sundays and holy-days. Judging from what we know of the demands made by Bach on his executants, the performance can not always have been an euphonious one, much less such an one as could reveal all the intrinsic wealth of the composition. Even if the choir, well trained to sing with pre-

[1] Bach is commonly known in Germany by his middle name, Sebastian.

cision, was fully equal to its task, it is hard to believe that the solo singers could have been equally competent to grapple with S. Bach's airs—those airs, of which the peculiar and not always convenient vocal style is to be mastered and rendered with musical freedom only by finished artists. . . . Among his MS. parts for strings and chorus we never find more than a single copy for each voice or instrument; the chorus-parts also contain the solo passages for their respective voices. From this fact alone might be concluded that both stringed instruments and chorus singers at these performances were very few in number; and a MS. letter of Bach's, still preserved in the archives of the Leipzig common council, containing complaints of the inadequate means offered him for performing his church music, together with an enumeration and description of the same, leaves no room for further doubt on this head."

Another fact to the point is that, in Bach's and Handel's day, such a functionary as a conductor, beating time with a bâton, was unknown. The organist led the performance, as he still does in our church choirs. In Philipp Emanuel Bach's treatise on the art of accompanying, we find:

"The organ is indispensable in church matters, on account of the fugues, the loud choruses, and in general for the sake of establishing a firm connection" (*i.e.*, between the various voices and instruments). "It increases the splendour and *preserves order.*"

Now, it is one thing to use the organ as a reinforcing agent, to strengthen certain vocal or in-

strumental parts, and thus add power to the volume of sound; but quite another thing, to use it as an independent element in a composition. On the use of the organ in combination with the orchestra, the following opinion of Berlioz (who may be considered high authority in all matters connected with the effect of combinations of different qualities of sound) is of value. He says:

"We must recognize the fact that its" (the organ's) "even, equal, uniform sonority never blends perfectly with the variously characterized voices of the orchestra, and that there seems to exist a secret antipathy between these two musical powers. The organ and the orchestra are both kings—or rather, the one is emperor and the other, pope; their interests are too vast and too divergent to be confounded. Thus, on nearly all occasions when this singular combination has been tried, either the organ has proudly domineered over the orchestra, or else the orchestra, forced to an immoderate pitch of energy, has well-nigh extinguished its adversary."

The intrinsic incompatibility of the organ with the orchestra is peculiarly to be felt in the accompaniment of airs, and concerted music for solo voices, where there can surely be no question of reinforcing weak parts. Of course, in such cases, only the softer stops can come into play; and just these stops so greatly lack decision of utterance and accent, that their contrast with the orchestral

instruments is peculiarly unfavourable to the equally balanced effect of polyphonic writing — doubly so when the tempo is at all rapid. In the concert-room, moreover, both organist and organ-pipes are at such a distance from the singer and the accompanying instruments in the orchestra, that anything like a sympathetic performance is rendered well-nigh impracticable. There is good historical evidence to support the belief, entertained by many persons, that Bach accompanied many of the airs in his works on a *Rückpositiv*,[1] or a *Regal*,[2] placed directly by the singer's side.

Franz has suggested supplying the place of an organ, in cases where that instrument is not to be used as a reinforcing agent, by a quartet of two clarinets and two bassoons; in some cases by the stringed instruments in the orchestra. This quartet of reed instruments has much the quality of tone of certain registers of the organ, and has the advantage of a far greater power of accent and superior dynamic variety. These instruments, together with a 'cello and double-bass (for the *continuo*), are to be placed close behind the singer, and consequently directly under the conductor's eye.

[1] *Rückpositiv* (Ger.) a back choir organ; that is, a choir organ which is behind the player, the connecting mechanism of which passes under his feet. (Stainer & Barrett's Dictionary of Musical Terms.)

[2] The *Regal* was a small portable organ.

This arrangement has proved eminently successful in many instances; in others it is not quite so satisfactory. The union of the second bassoon with the 'cello and double-bass, especially when the part runs low, sometimes sounds thick and muddy. This defect might be cured by omitting the second bassoon part in such passages (as Franz himself has suggested); it is noteworthy that Mozart has in no instance doubled the *continuo* with any of his additional parts. At all events, it is well known that neither Bach nor Handel were at all averse to a very solid bass in their works; the number of instruments the latter sometimes crowded together upon his bass is simply surprising, according to our modern notions.

And even if Franz has not been wholly successful in some passages—for his surpassing mastery in counterpoint and his fine musical instinct have nothing whatever to do with his possible lack of skill in orchestration—he, and notably Mozart, have been so thoroughly successful in many of their arrangements of Bach and Handel scores for orchestra, without organ, that the possibility of its being well and satisfactorily done has been convincingly demonstrated. But, upon the whole, this subject has not yet been made clear by sufficiently exhaustive experiments, and no one can have come to a rational final conclusion about every case.

It must, however, not be forgotten that this question is, after all, of secondary importance. Whether a musical phrase be played on an organ or on a clarinet, it still remains one and the same phrase. Whatever opinion one may hold of the condition of the art of instrumentation *per se* in Bach's and Handel's day, it must be fully evident to any one who takes the trouble to study these masters' scores, that instrumentation was a far less integral and important element in the art of composition then than it has become since. The prime question in this matter is: *What shall be played?* not, *On what instruments shall it be played?*

GIACOMO MEYERBEER

GIACOMO MEYERBEER

If the ardent Gluckists and Piccinnists, quarrelling over their wine and coffee in the Café de la Rotonde, with the busts of the two composers looking coolly down upon them, as they exchanged their shots of "statue and pedestal," "orchestra and stage," and mutually lashed themselves up to the frenzied pitch in the heat of argument, could but suddenly have foreseen to what lengths the principles they discussed would be carried in after-times, dumb astonishment might well have put a momentary stop to their excited bickerings. Imagine the dismay of the disembodied spirit of some Gluckist—or even of the good Christoph Willibald himself—returned to earth and the Académie de Musique, at witnessing a modern French grand opera by Meyerbeer; or, if perchance it should travel as far as Bayreuth, at opening its long-closed eyes on Wagner's *Nibelungen*, and being told that the extraordinary works that met its gaze and sounded so strangely in its bewildered ears were the latest outgrowths of the Gluck opera! Con-

ceive the astonishment of a Piccinnist ghost at finding its idol's lightly-warbling muse decked out in the flaunting trappings of Rossini's *Siége de Corinthe!*

Yet so do things grow in this world. One man sows the seeds of dramatic *truthfulness* on the lyric stage, a generation or two spring up and pass away, and his successor reaps unheard-of and unimagined crops of dramatic *effect*. Another man pins his faith to the independence of music in opera, and is soon enough followed by another still, who raises music up upon the throne of absolute autocracy.

With regard to the Rossini outgrowth of the Piccinni principle, little or nothing need be said now. Rossini is hardly cold in his grave, and where are his operas? Most of those works, so full of exquisite music, so instinct with genius, which but a generation ago intoxicated all Europe and were the cynosure of enraptured crowds, now struggle painfully for a respectful hearing; singers will not (too often can not) sing them, managers neglect them, the public has forgotten them; their god-like grace and beauty lie shrouded in dust on library shelves.

But Meyerbeer still lives in his works, as vigourous a life as ever. He has had no successor who can rightly claim to wear his mantle. The name

of his followers, imitators, and *hoc servum pecus* is legion; but the Gounods, Thomas's, Massenets can not wield his sceptre. Yet his example and success were too brilliant not to tempt to emulation. Even his most successful rival, Giuseppe Verdi, could not refrain from paying him the late homage of imitation, as soon as death had called him from the field of action; not content with the laurels won by *Nabucco*, *Ernani*, and *Rigoletto*, the hot-blooded Italian made his bid for fresh honours in the path Meyerbeer had so triumphantly trod. Yet from *Aïda* to the *Huguenots* is a long step; Meyerbeer is still the one and only Meyerbeer.

In considering a man whose career was so uniquely brilliant, one can not help casting about to discover wherein the secret of his success mainly lay. He certainly had many high qualities, yet can not fairly be said to have possessed any especial one of them to a transcendent degree. His natural intrinsically musical endowments were small compared to Rossini's; in spontaneity of inspiration, in melodic power, in what may be called the specific musical sense, he falls behind the Italian *maestro*. As a contrapuntist, in spite of his pretensions and the claims made for him by his French admirers, he has given nothing to the world that can entitle him to a really high rank. His mas-

tery of musical form, his power of developing a theme into a finely and stoutly organized composition of sustained interest, must be called slight, when judged by any high standard. His dramatic power was great, it is true; yet the instances in which it shows itself as of inherently fine and pure quality are few and far between. His gift for *theatrical effect*, however, was indubitable, nay, utterly phenomenal.

Possessed of musical genius and perceptions which, if not of the highest sort, were still sufficiently stout and keen to serve as a basis for a high degree of culture, Meyerbeer had a singularly sharp eye for whatever was striking and *saisissant*, as the French say; his appreciation of the effective has seldom been paralleled. Unremitting work, eager and ceaseless observation, an easy-going artistic conscience—or possibly the lack of absolutely fine artistic perceptions—enabled him to develop this power to the utmost. The keenness of his observation of other composers, the lightning rapidity with which he would take the slightest hint from the works of other men, was something astounding. Of plagiarism, in the invidious sense, one finds little in his compositions; he had a very distinct and unmistakable individuality of his own; and, if we find him borrowing ideas from others, they have been melted down in the crucible of his

mind, recast in a mould peculiar to himself, and bear his own stamp.

For a man of his unusual powers of assimilating other people's ideas, he appeared on the stage just at the right moment; time and conditions could not have been better chosen for the advantageous display of his peculiar talents. Although what we call Meyerbeer's third, or French, manner was something quite unprecedented in the annals of the lyric stage, circumstances had combined to prepare the public mind for it; and, notwithstanding the astonishment with which its first appearance was greeted, the public soon found it nicely suited to their wants.

Richard Wagner, in his figurative way, has well described the conditions under which Meyerbeer developed his new style of dramatic writing. The account must, to be sure, be taken with a grain of salt, but it is too good not to be given here—with all practicable condensation. Wagner writes:

"In the fair and much-bespattered land of Italy sat the carelessly prurient Rossini, who, in his facile, lordly way, had tried out its musical fat for the benefit of the emaciated world of art, and now looked on with a half-astonished smile at the flounderings of gallant Parisian hunters after folk-melodies. One of these was a good horseman, and whenever he dismounted after a headlong ride, one might be sure he had found a melody that would fetch a good price. So he now rode like all possessed through the

wares of fish and costermongery in the Naples market, making everything fly about as in a whirlwind; cackling and curses followed his course, angry fists were clenched at him. With lightning quickness his keen nostrils caught the scent of a superb revolution of fishmongers and greengrocers. But the opportunity was big with still further profit! Out galloped the Parisian horseman on the Portici road, to the boats and nets of those artless singing fishermen, who catch fish, sleep, rage, play with wife and children, hurl dirk-knives, even knock each other on the head, and all amid incessant singing. Confess, Master Auber, that was a famous ride, and better than on a hippogriff, which only prances off into mid-air—whence there is, upon the whole, nothing to be brought home but colds in the head and coughs! The horseman rode back again, dismounted, made Rossini the politest reverential bow (he well knew why!) took a special post-chaise for Paris, and what he cooked up there in the twinkling of an eye was nothing less than the *Dumb Girl of Portici.*

"Rossini looked from afar at the splendid rowdidow, and, on his way to Paris, thought it profitable to rest a while amid the snowy Alps of Switzerland, and listen with perked-up ears to what musical converse the nimble lads there were wont to hold with their mountains and cows. Once arrived in Paris, he made his politest bow to Auber (he well knew why!), and with huge paternal joy presented the world with his youngest born, which, in a moment of happy inspiration, he had christened *William Tell.*

"Thus the *Muette de Portici* and *Guillaume Tell* became the two axes about which the whole speculative world of opera music revolved.

"Meyerbeer had a special knack at observing closely and

on the spot each successive phenomenon in the above-mentioned progress of opera music; he dogged its footsteps constantly and everywhere. It is particularly noteworthy that he only *followed* its lead, but never walked *side by side with*, let alone leading, it. He was like the starling, which follows the plowshare in the fields, gladly picking out the angleworms turned up in its furrow.

"Meyerbeer has not one single individual tendency; but, by his eavesdropping, he has always caught each and every word of his predecessors, and elaborated it with such monstrous ostentation, and withal with such astounding rapidity, that he whose footsteps he was dogging had hardly uttered a word before Meyerbeer would instantly shriek out the whole sentence, perfectly unconcerned as to whether he had understood the word aright. Hence it not seldom happened that he said something different from what the original speaker meant to say. But Meyerbeer's noise was so deafening that the first speaker never got to the true expression of his own meaning, and at last found himself forced to chime in with Meyerbeer's phrase, as his only chance of putting in his word at all. In Germany Meyerbeer never succeeded in finding a phrase that would in any way fit Weber's original word. What Weber uttered in such plenitude of melodious life could not be reëchoed by Meyerbeer's acquired, arid formalism. So at last, tired of such fruitless toil, forgetful of his friend, he listened only to Rossini's siren strains, and migrated to the land where those raisins[1] grew. He thus became the weathercock of music in Europe, turning round undecided for a while after every change in the wind, and standing fast only when its direction had be-

[1] The pun on *Rosinen* (raisins) and Rossini is naturally lost in translation.

come well settled. Meyerbeer only wrote operas *à la* Rossini in Italy until the great wind had begun to veer about in Paris, and Auber and Rossini had blown the new breeze to a hurricane with the *Muette* and *Tell*. How soon was Meyerbeer in Paris! There he found, in the Gallicized Weber (only think of *Robin des Bois!*)[1] and the be-Berliozed Beethoven, treasures which neither Auber nor Rossini had noticed, as lying too remote from their purposes, but which Meyerbeer, with his cosmopolitan Jack-of-all-trades eye, knew very well how to value. He grasped together everything that thus presented itself into a wondrously gaudy, motley armful, and produced something at whose strident shriek both Auber and Rossini suddenly became inaudible: the grim devil *Robert* fetched them one and all."

Somewhat over-sarcastic an account, and too plainly one-sided; but it throws a strong electric light upon a very characteristic trait in Meyerbeer. Indeed, it is almost easy to forgive Wagner the apparently spiteful drop of vinegar with which he has seasoned this figurative sketch, for there is something in Meyerbeer's music that unavoidably ruffles the temper of any one who is inclined to take the art seriously. If we would admire his high qualities unrestrictedly, we can do so only by painfully repressing a sort of rage into which his

[1] "The *Freischütz*, not in its native beauty, but mutilated, vulgarized, tortured, and insulted in a thousand ways by an arranger—the *Freischütz* transformed into *Robin des Bois*—was given at the Odéon. The theatre filled its coffers, and M. Castil-Blaze, who had pillaged the masterwork, raked in over a hundred thousand francs."—HECTOR BERLIOZ: *Mémoires*.

short-comings are too apt to throw us. Although there are many pages in his works that easily compel enthusiastic homage, it is difficult to come away from a performance of a whole opera of his in an entirely agreeable frame of mind; his gold is mixed with so much alloy, and the alloy is often of very base metal indeed.

One of Meyerbeer's traits, which has been very loudly admired, is his power of writing *characteristic* music, his skill in local colouring. This power of his was unquestionably great, yet it seldom shows itself as of really poetic quality. He could seize upon the salient points of a situation with astonishing sureness of grasp, but he had little faculty of idealizing them. Take, for instance, the coronation scene in the *Prophète*—a situation of which ideal use might well have been made. The ceremonial music in this scene is certainly as gorgeous as could be wished; it is a fitting musical expression of the glittering pomp of a gala church ceremony. One is tempted to call it the most splendid ceremonial music money could buy. But it stops here. As for genuine grandeur and impressiveness, it affects the listener of really lofty musical aspirations much as the rich ceremonial pomp of a feast-day high mass in St. Peter's affects a non-Catholic observer—as an overpoweringly brilliant display. It is, in fact, a superb,

dazzling cathedral ceremony, taken bodily out of the church and put upon the stage. But in the cathedral all this theatrical pomp is ennobled, idealized, and hallowed (in the believer's eyes) by the solemn fact that it is a divine service, by the more than ever sensible presence of the omnipotent God; on the stage this idealizing element falls out at once. What even approximate substitute could the composer give us, save the intrinsically noble and elevating character of his music? The church ceremony is idealized by its own lofty purpose; its mimic presentation on the stage must be idealized by the composer. Meyerbeer has not done it.[1]

Again, take the much-lauded Pré-aux-Clercs scene in the *Huguenots*. The music is certainly characteristic enough. A man like Berlioz, who

[1] To this may be replied that it is just in this want of intrinsic nobility in the music that Meyerbeer shows his accurate perception of the character of the situation; that, of all ceremonies ever performed in a church, the coronation of John of Leyden was the most hollow and unlovely; that John himself was a mere rascal, the three leading Anabaptists little better than shrewd theological pot-hunters, and the whole Anabaptist rabble a set of bloodthirsty fanatics. Yet do we honour the high-souled artist, especially the high-souled musician, for taking a situation by its highest, or its lowest, side? Look at the statue scene in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, where the Don stands as the incarnation of human impiety, brought to bay by inexorable fate. Mozart does not here bring his hero's impiety and low sensuality into the foreground, but rather his chivalric courage and high-bred courtliness. And, upon the whole, when and wherever music is to be made, should it not be the very best and noblest the situation can possibly warrant?

always had a keen relish for local colour, and was, upon the whole, so dazzled by the brilliant aspect of Meyerbeer's genius that his finer æsthetic sensibilities were abnormally blunted whenever he was brought face to face with it—Berlioz could write of this scene with perfect honesty: "The quarrel between the women, the litanies of the Virgin, the song of the Huguenot soldiers, all present to the ear a musical tissue of astounding richness, the web of which the listener can easily follow without the complex thought of the composer being blurred for an instant. This marvel of dramatized counterpoint. . . ," etc. Yes, the thing is written with great skill, although the plan is not really so complicated, with all its pretentiousness, as a verbal description might lead one to imagine. The *Rataplan* is just such music as one can imagine soldiers singing; the prayer of the nuns is a fair sample of much that is sung in Catholic convents. As I have said, it is all as characteristic as may be, and the ensemble effect is undoubtedly striking; it has the salt of a not too unfamiliar reality. But, looking at it from another point of view, what utterly miserable music it is! What a mere two-pence-ha'penny-worth of real inspiration there is behind it all! The scene is unidealized from beginning to end. The composer has treated a by no means lofty, yet pregnant, subject in a purely

photographic way; he shows us no more in the scene than the vulgarest eye could descry, and seems quite content to be exact, without a thought of being imaginative or artistic in any noble sense of the word. One may say that Meyerbeer seldom took higher artistic ground than the barest necessities of the case in hand demanded.

It would, however, be very far from the truth to say that he was incapable of treating exalted subjects in a fitting way. Yet he needed the spur of a really lofty theme, of a highly poetic situation, to enable him to rise into a high musical atmosphere; he could not evolve really great music out of his own brain alone, and it may safely be said that, of his purely instrumental works, not one is of great value. Of these latter, his overture to *Struensee* should probably be given the first place; but you would pierce it clean through the heart by comparing it with an overture by Schumann, Mendelssohn, or even Weber—let alone Beethoven.

It has been said that Meyerbeer lacked genuine sentiment and passion. I think this is hardly true. It were nearer the truth to say that great warmth of feeling was not habitual with him; for, in treating scenes in which sentiment and passion predominate, he has sometimes risen to the full height of the situation. I know of no music that glows with a more passionate warmth than some passages

in the great duet between Valentine and Raoul that closes the fourth act of *les Huguenots*. It is not uninteresting to remember that this wonderful duet, one of the greatest in all opera, was an afterthought; it formed no part of the original scheme of the opera, the fourth act in Scribe and Déchamps's finished libretto ending with the famous "*À minuit!*" of the Benediction of Poniards. It was only at one of the later stage rehearsals that Adolphe Nourrit, who took the part of Raoul, suggested to Meyerbeer that here would be a fine opportunity for a love-scene. Meyerbeer jumped at the idea immediately, and either he or Nourrit sketched out a plan for the scene as soon as the rehearsal was over; this sketch was forthwith handed over to Scribe, who soon wrote the text for it, and Meyerbeer was almost as quick in composing the music. As soon as the duet was finished, it was put into rehearsal, and formed part of the opera at the first performance. Perhaps the spontaneity of inspiration and passionateness of expression Meyerbeer shows in this magnificent scene may be in part due to the, with him, unusual rapidity of its conception and execution; for he had no time to work it over and elaborate it, as was, almost without exception, his wont.

Even Wagner, whose not entirely reverent estimate of Meyerbeer's genius I have already quoted,

felt himself impelled to write of this admirable scene:

"We observe . . . that, despite the composer's distinct incapacity to give us from his own musical faculty the slightest evidence of musical vitality, he nevertheless raises himself to the highest and most incontestible artistic power in certain passages of his opera music. These passages are the offspring of a genuine inspiration, and, if we examine more closely, we shall perceive whence this inspiration has come—clearly from the poetic nature of the situation itself. Wherever the poet has forgotten his trammelling consideration for the musician,[1] wherever he has involuntarily stumbled upon a situation in which he could inhale and exhale a free, exhilarating breath of actual human life, he directly imparts it to the musician as an inspiring afflatus; and the composer who, even by exhausting all the wealth of his musical predecessors, could not give us a single proof of real creative power, is all at once capable of the richest, noblest, and most soul-stirring musical expression. I refer especially to separate passages in the well-known heart-breaking love-scene in the fourth act of the *Huguenots*, and emphatically to the invention of the wondrously affecting melody in G-flat major—a melody which, springing as it does, like a fragrant blossom, from a situation that seizes upon all the fibres of the human heart with rapturous pain, leaves only very little, and surely only that which is most perfect, in musical composition to be brought into comparison with it."

Of hardly less emotional power, if of another sort, is the slow movement of the duet between

[1] Meyerbeer was noted for forcing his librettist, Scribe, to conform entirely to his requirements for stage effect in all his operas. See farther on.

Valentine and Marcel in the third act of the same opera. Bertram's phrase, "*De ma gloire éclipsée, de ma splendeur passée,*" in the third act of *Robert,* brims over with tragic pathos.

What Meyerbeer did lack was the sense for true grandeur; we may look almost in vain for a passage of really impressive solemnity in his works. The invocation "*Brahma, Visnou, Siva!*" in *l'Africaine,* the betrothal scene in the fifth act of *les Huguenots,* the consecration music in *le Prophète,* all lack the true ring, in spite of their often striking effectiveness. The passage which, to my mind, savours most of really beautiful solemnity is a phrase for brass instruments (at first in D major, later in B-flat major) in the priests' march in the fourth act of *l'Africaine*—a phrase only eight measures long, which is of singularly impressive beauty; it almost sounds, barring the instrumentation, like Beethoven.

When he entered upon the domain of the terrible, Meyerbeer was more easily at home. A more trenchant expression of savage cruelty than the phrase "*Tuez les Huguenots!*" in the fifth act of that opera, can hardly be found in music. The terrific effect of the Benediction of Poniards, with its surging "*À cette cause sainte,*" is not of quite so genuine quality: the thing is what the French call *savamment écrite,*—which is not quite what

we mean by "learnedly written,"—rather than freely and spontaneously inspired; it smells somewhat of the lamp. With all its piling the Pelion of physical effectiveness upon the Ossa of noise, it has not the frank, irresistible maelstrom-rush of Verdi's "*O sommo Carlo,*" in the fourth act of *Ernani*. Moreover, it utterly lacks nobility of expression; a want that is not felt in the "*Tuez les Huguenots!*" as there all elevation of style is out of the question. Most of the infernal music in *Robert* is conventionally diabolic, rather than really terrible. Even the highly beautiful procession of nuns, in the fourth act, owes its unearthly character more to the tam-tam than to its inherent musical quality; and its low 3ds and 6ths on two bassoons *soli* better deserve Liszt's joke (which need not be repeated here) than the admiration their would-be ghastliness has often called forth. Still, there is no denying that Meyerbeer has done brilliant things in this field, although he never rose to that truly poetic pitch of diabolic imaginativeness that Weber reached in his *Freischütz*. When he supped with the devil, it was with a tolerably long spoon.

When he attempted the graceful and fascinating, his habitual want of spontaneity handicapped him not a little; he also had a tendency to fall into the trivial—a besetting sin of his. Yet he

has written many things that have all the airy charm of native grace. Much of the ballet music in *Robert,* the familiar "*Ombre légère*" in *le Pardon de Ploërmel,* Sélika's swan-song, "*Un cygne au doux ramage,*" in *l'Africaine,* are good examples of what Meyerbeer could do in the siren vein.

But, upon the whole, it was neither in the terrible, the passionate, nor the graceful and charming, that Meyerbeer's genius displayed itself in its fullest glory. It was in the realm of the heroic, the chivalric, and knightly, that he was most conspicuously at home and worked with the most unerring touch. There is a flavour of high-bred courtliness and mediæval gallantry to much of Meyerbeer's music, for which we look in vain in the works of his contemporaries. Wagner never got that touch, not even in *Tannhäuser* nor *Lohengrin;* he could be heroic enough, and in the most highly poetic way, too; but the heroic element in his music was more akin to the superhuman or godlike, it had nothing of that specific *mondain* flavour we find in Meyerbeer's. Where Wagner painted heroes and demi-gods, Meyerbeer drew gallant knights and gentlemen. It is this quality that shines pre-eminent in such masterly pages as the duel septet for male voices in the third act of the *Huguenots.* I think that, in this in

every respect wonderful number, and notably in the overwhelming phrase, "*Et bonne épée et bon courage, chacun pour soi et Dieu pour tous!*" Meyerbeer's power reaches its apogee; I know of no other such perfect expression of the devil-may-care recklessness and knightly gallantry of the mediæval cavalier in all music. Scarcely less fine in this respect is the first finale of *l'Africaine* (also for male voices, by the way), from Vasco de Gama's phrase, "*D'impie et de rebelle,*" to the end, albeit here the somewhat over-finical harmony detracts a little from the native fire and vigour of the melody. The bacchanalian chorus, "*Aux seuls plaisirs fidèles,*" the Sicilienne, "*Ô Fortune, à ton caprice,*" and Isabelle's air with chorus, "*La trompette guerrière,*" in *Robert le Diable,* are all fine examples of this chivalric quality in Meyerbeer; even the male quartet which closes the second act of the *Prophète* has something of it, notably in the phrase, "*Et la couronne que le Ciel donne,*" although the musical value of the piece is not great.

Meyerbeer was not a great contrapuntist. He was sufficiently skilled in the craft not to let his running, or imitative, counterpoint interfere with the dramatic character of his music; but his counterpoint, *per se* and judged on its own merits, often makes one smile. Such writing as is to be

found in the prelude to *les Huguenots,* or the one to *Robert le Diable,* is too flimsy and puerile, from a contrapuntal point of view, to be called even respectable. Places where he has pretentiously worked up several themes together — as in the Pré-aux-Clercs scene in the *Huguenots,* or the scene between Valentine, Raoul, and Marcel in the church, in the fifth act of the same opera— may impress the unwary as fine feats of polyphonic writing; but the technical difficulties conquered in these cases were not really serious, neither is the skill shown in conquering them such as to call for admiring comment. The expert sees clearly enough that the contrasted themes in the Pré-aux-Clercs scene were first written together in score, before being given out separately; so that bringing them into conjunction was really no feat at all. On the other hand, the famous combination of three motives (against running counterpoint, to boot) in Wagner's *Meistersinger* prelude does not impress one as being the result of any such subterfuge.

Meyerbeer's power of developing one or more themes into an extended movement of sustained musical interest was, in general, not remarkable. The purely musical aspect of his elaborate finales and ensemble pieces is not precisely what is most striking about them. His finest effort in this

direction is unquestionably the last terzet, "*Que faut-il faire?*" in *Robert;* and this is closely grazed by the *stretto* of the first finale of the *Africaine.* Yet even these would have to struggle hard to win the name of masterpieces of musical form. But he knew well how to sustain and gradually intensify the dramatic interest, and work up to an effective climax in his grand concerted numbers. Thus the finale to the fourth act of the *Prophète* is one immense *crescendo* of dramatic effectiveness, albeit that, as pure music, it is rather poor and commonplace. The one great stroke in it, Fides's frantic outburst, "*L'ingrat! l'ingrat! il ne me reconnaît plus!*" deserved stronger and more coherent musical treatment; the phrase itself was a really powerful inspiration, and the musical weakness of its working-out is all the more apparent and disheartening that the phrase contains figures eminently adapted to extended development.

The strongly dramatic character of Meyerbeer's music does not always lie in itself alone, but often in the opportunity it affords the singer for an impassioned or imposingly declamatory style of delivery. No amount of vocal ranting can seem out of place in some of Meyerbeer's more violent passages; they seem made on purpose for it. Such things as "*À cette cause sainte,*" in the Benedic-

tion of Poniards, and the *stretto* of the second finale of the *Huguenots* (perhaps as vile a bit of musical vulgarity as even Meyerbeer ever was guilty of, fit, as has been said, for a "revolution of *poissardes*") can not be overdone in performance.

And here at last we stumble upon the word "vulgarity." It must be admitted that it is impossible to speak at any length about Meyerbeer without using it. Of all his faults, his innate tendency toward that which is artistically trivial and vulgar is the most serious. His very effectiveness is often vulgar and meretricious in itself. He must have been a man of the most elastic artistic conscience; at least, it is inconceivable how a composer who could write one quarter of what Meyerbeer did could have any real respect for the other three quarters. He so often makes the impression of being a mere musico-dramatic pot-hunter; with all his genius, all his sense for what was fine and noble, his appetite for praise and pudding was so enormous. He himself once admitted that he never could forego the pleasure of "bringing down the house," whenever the opportunity presented itself. The ostentation of his style is at times astounding. In spite of the generally dramatic atmosphere of his music, Rossini himself could not have exceeded the coolness with

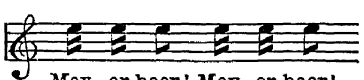
which he would sometimes stop the impassioned flow of a composition, that the singer might have a chance of displaying her vocal flexibility and agility in an elaborate cadenza. He knew well enough that singers are fond of brilliant *bravura* passages, as one of the surest means of reaping applause, and also that applause bestowed upon a singer is pretty sure to add its imputed lustre to the music sung; so he loaded his scores with brilliant cadenzas. These vocal cadenzas of Meyerbeer's show great knowledge of the voice on his part, and are often singularly effective; yet they also are apt to contrast too sharply with the general character of the pieces in which they occur, and often seem actually lugged in by the hair. They are not, as a rule, amalgamated with the rest of the music, like the florid passages in Bellini or Rossini. Bellini's and Rossini's vocal *coloratura*—like Chopin's on the pianoforte—seems often but the natural efflorescence of the melody itself; their melodies now and then blossom out into florid bedizenment as naturally and beautifully as the apple-branches in spring. Meyerbeer's *coloratura*, on the contrary, too often seems artificial, sought after with malice prepense, and intended merely for display. His florid cadenzas for several voices, of which the one at the close of the unaccompanied terzet, "*Cruel moment, fatal mystère,*" in *Ro-*

bert le Diable is a good example, have long been famous, and the invention of this sort of thing has more than once been claimed for him. But these polyphonic cadenzas of Meyerbeer's are really a clean steal from—or, to put it more politely, a brilliant and effective imitation of—the famous passage in B major, "*Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt,*" in Beethoven's ninth symphony. I well remember being present at a rehearsal of the ninth symphony one afternoon, when, after the solo quartet had sung this wonderful passage, and the soprano had safely alighted from her dangerous high B-natural, a musician by my side muttered: "There goes one of Meyerbeer's principal claims to *originality!*"

Still, the charge of being lugged in by the hair can not justly be brought against all Meyerbeer's florid vocal writing; in some cases the brilliant *coloratura* is quite as natural an outgrowth and efflorescence of the melody itself as it is in similar things by Rossini, Bellini, or Donizetti. In his French grand operas, Meyerbeer was fond of writing essentially *coloratura* parts for light soprano voices, and treated them quite differently from his heavier "dramatic" parts. Such parts are Isabelle, in *Robert le Diable;* the Queen, in *les Huguenots;* Berthe, in *le Prophète* The music of these parts is essentially florid in its whole

plan, the ornamental *coloratura* blossoms out from the melody itself, instead of being confined, for the most part, to a long closing cadenza. Undoubtedly these florid, light soprano rôles introduce into his scores an element which Meyerbeer always knew how to value—the element of variety. The worst that can be urged against them is that all this display of vocal *agilità* gives the characters—who generally happen to be queens or princesses—somewhat too much of the air of *grisettes*.

There is one characteristic rhythmic effect which Meyerbeer uses *ad nauseam*, so that it becomes a serious blemish in his style; his fondness for this particular rhythmic device—which may be described as an anapest, with the *ictus* on the first syllable—gave rise in Germany to the only nickname ever bestowed upon him—the "Cuckoo of composers." As the cuckoo's only song is the repetition of its own name, "*Cuckoo! cuckoo!*" so does Meyerbeer's music seem to keep repeating



Most of Meyerbeer's habitual devices are extremely simple. Quite a number of his melodies are little else than variations of familiar bugle-calls, written for the open notes of the plain bugle; and he was fond of harmonizing them in two parts,

as if they were played on a pair of bugles. Such phrases as Bertrand's "*Roi des enfers, c'est moi qui vous appelle!*" in *Robert*, "*Et la couronne que le Ciel donne,*" in *le Prophète*, and many others, come under this head. Even the great hymn, "*Roi du Ciel,*" in the third act of *le Prophète*, might be ranked with these, were it not for its full harmony, which suggests a comparison with a certain passage in B-flat major in the first movement of Beethoven's fifth pianoforte concerto. Meyerbeer's use of long organ-points, either simple or else varied by accessory notes above or below, is conspicuous and often very happy; his rhythms are usually perspicuous, well marked, and full of verve. He was fond of sudden surprises, and sounded all the depths and shoals of enharmonic modulation; his harmony abounds in striking subtleties and unexpected changes. Of instrumentation, the effective grouping of voices, and all the various devices of musical stage effect, he was a consummate master; his *Étoile du Nord* was long held up in France as an unsurpassed model of skill in the treatment of wind instruments. His patience was indomitable; he would write and rewrite certain passages over and over again, and have them sung or played to him by different artists time after time, until he was completely satisfied that he could not further improve them. He

had the true Semitic respect for small details; the story has often been told of his paying a flute-player (unattached to the Académie de Musique) out of his own pocket, because he was the only man in Paris who could play a certain cadenza to his liking.

Upon the whole, he was a man very hard to imitate, but exceedingly easy to parody. A good half of Offenbach may be called a laughable parody on Meyerbeer; many of the ludicrous effects of the buffoon of the Variétés and the Bouffes-Parisiens can claim a sort of left-handed relationship with the music of the king of the Opéra. The boulevard resounds with a burlesque echo of the rue Lepelletier. In some cases, indeed, the original outbids the parody in ridiculousness; such fustian as the unison phrase, "*Fais que ta grâce infini-i-i-i-i-i-i-e,*" in the first act of the *Africaine,* where a cyclopean accent falls on each separate *i,* goes beyond Offenbach.

Meyerbeer was exceedingly particular about his libretti; and in a curious way, too, for hardly a famous composer in the whole list has set worse ones to music. What he cared for most was a series of chances for dramatic effect, for effective musical treatment. For coherent dramatic development of the plot he cared little; for historical, geographical, or ethnological accuracy,

nothing at all. Few opera texts are more disjointed, confused, and hard to follow than that of *Robert le Diable,* although most of the scenes in it, taken by themselves, are admirably dramatic. He made no bones of having his Marcel, the old Huguenot soldier, sing Luther's "*Ein' feste Burg,*" although he knew well enough that the Huguenots were Calvinists, and not Lutherans; but he also knew that "*Ein' feste Burg*" was generally familiar in France as the war-cry of Protestantism, and that it would be recognized as such by his audiences. Its dramatic effect, not its sectarian accuracy, was what he cared for. In like manner, it did not trouble him a whit that Vasco de Gama (in *l'Africaine*) should find Brahmanical religious rites flourishing on the island of Madagascar; Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva gave him a chance to write some gorgeous ceremonial music, and that was enough. This passion of Meyerbeer's for effect pure and simple, effect *quand même* and at all hazards, led Wagner to say of him—with something of over-subtlety, perhaps:

"The secret of Meyerbeer's opera music is—*effect.* . . . Would we express more exactly what we understand by this word, we might translate 'effect' by *result without a cause* (*Wirkung ohne Ursache*).[1] Indeed the effect Meyerbeer's

[1] Here Wagner makes a subtle distinction between the two German words for "effect," using *Effekt* (of Latin derivation) either half-ironi-

music produces upon those who are able to find edification therein is wanting in an efficient cause. This miracle is possible only to the most superficial music; *i.e.*, to a power of expression that has striven (in the opera) to become more and more independent of all that was worthy to be expressed, and proclaims its independence by degrading the subject matter, through which alone it could rationally exist and be justified, to such a level of moral and artistic nothingness, that *it* in turn can find *its* existence, proper proportions, and justification only in an act of abstract musical volition, which, as such, is wanting in all true expression.

This is tantamount to saying that Meyerbeer's tremendous effects are too often to be recognized as merely superficial and artificial, not resting on any profound psychological basis. The criticism is just enough in the main, although it makes one smile a little; for the bare idea of Meyerbeer's taking either himself or his art as seriously as all that, could surely have occurred only to a man as desperately in earnest as Wagner.

Meyerbeer led Scribe, his librettist *en titre*, a dog's life with his perpetual demands for alterations; indeed Wagner may have been quite right—and far more to the point than in his hair-splitting about "*Effekt*" and "*Wirkung*"—in suspecting

cally, or else in a bad sense, and *Wirkung* (of Teutonic origin) in a good sense. The whole passage reflects Wagner's pet idea of the intimate union of Poetry and Music, and of the impossibility of a noble musical conception coming from anything but a lofty poetic inspiration.

that it was mainly owing to Meyerbeer's obstinate interference that the usually bright, clever, and *spirituel* Scribe, the crowned master of dramatic construction, turned out such ridiculous libretti for him. But Meyerbeer knew well what he wanted, and would not rest till he got it; Heine's saying of *Robert:*

> Von Meyerbeer ist die Musik,
> Der schlechte Text von Scribe,

probably did not trouble him in the least, no matter how Scribe might feel about it. One may even suspect that Meyerbeer's finicking interference with his librettist may at times have been fruitful in good results. Of course, it is impossible, at this distance, to tell with any degree of certainty what things in the texts of Meyerbeer's operas were due to his suggestion; but one now and then hits upon a passage which seems as if it must have been imagined by him. Take, for instance, the whole planning-out of the scene between Alice and Bertrand in the forest, in the third act of *Robert le Diable;* one can not escape the suspicion that Meyerbeer must have had a hand in it. You may look through the whole field of lyric drama without finding a scene more admirably adapted—and apparently with direct intent—to musical treatment. The text of this duet doubles upon

itself like a hare, just as the musical form does that was almost invariable in Meyerbeer's day. When the opening phrase, to which Bertrand sings his "*Mais Alice, qu'as-tu donc?*" returns near the end at Bertrand's words, "*Ainsi, tu n'as rien vu?*" as it should to complete the circle of the musical form, we find that it is quite as exactly expressive of the sense of the words as it was in the beginning; and yet the dramatic development of the scene has gone on as uninterruptedly as possible. This result could hardly have been obtained with a less ingenious planning-out of the scene. Bertrand, fresh from his diabolic incantations, finds Alice alone in the forest, and fears she may have been a witness of what he has been doing; he accordingly plies her with a series of questions, to discover how much she has seen or heard, to each of which questions the terrified girl answers "*Rien!*" ("Nothing!") But Bertrand sees plainly enough from her manner that she really has seen something, and threatens her with the most terrible mishaps to her and hers, if she should dare to reveal a jot of it. Having thus got her completely in his power, he then proceeds to put a second series of questions to her — only ironically, this time — again asking her what she has seen or heard; to all of which the poor girl can only answer "*Rien!*" precisely

as she did at first. It is just this second, ironical series of questions that I strongly suspect of having been suggested to Scribe by Meyerbeer; it shows the musician's keen eye for a chance to bring back his theme according to a regular musical plan, and at the same time, the essentially dramatic composer's solicitude for having this return of his theme dramatically justified. In this respect the scene is, as far as I know, unique in the annals of opera; one may say that its dramatic working-out follows an essentially musical scheme.

In the course of this essay I have more than once taken occasion to refer to Meyerbeer's dramatic power. This was really the ground-tone of the man's genius. If his conscious striving was ever toward effectiveness, effectiveness in any and every imaginable way, the true bent of his better genius was essentially dramatic. This is one reason why he found so congenial a field in France; for French opera had, from the beginning, always been intrinsically dramatic in character. And perhaps the chief secret of his immediate and overwhelming success in Paris was that, besides being dramatic by instinct, he, either by instinct or by calculation, gave expression to his dramatic conceptions in an essentially theatrical and scenic way. No Frenchman ever had a finer *entente de la scène*, a keener sense for the stage, than Meyer-

beer. And, new as his music was in many respects, great as were the changes he introduced into the art of opera writing, he fell in with the prevailing French views on theatrical art in a way, and to an extent, exceedingly few foreigners had done before him. His changes, reforms — call them what you will—were not like Wagner's, attempts fundamentally to remodel the very idea of the lyric drama itself; what he did was far more in the way of showing the French, with the greatest possible distinctness, exactly what the operatic ideal was that had long vaguely hovered before their mental vision, and bringing the form of the grand opera into closer sympathy with that ideal than it had been before. I do not see how his immediate success with the French can be explained on other grounds.

There were things in *Robert le Diable,* his first French grand opera, which both frightened and disheartened all who took part in the rehearsals; some of the music was so utterly unprecedented in character, if not in form, that the singers had no little difficulty in understanding it and, from Dr. Paul Véron, then director of the Académie de Musique, down to the scene-shifters, every one connected with the undertaking predicted its flat failure with the public. It takes a certain mental effort for us now to appreciate how absolutely and

audaciously new the whole aspect of much of this music was in 1831; how strangely, for instance, the duet between Alice and Bertrand, referred to above, must have sounded in French ears then! It took no mean daring to present such a thing to the public in those days. Yet the public did like it, when they heard it; for, as I have surmised, it was really in harmony with their half-formulated ideas of what opera should be, it was what they had long unconsciously wanted—only more so.

Meyerbeer's originality was perhaps more one of manner than of matter. Yet we must recognize that, in one particular at least, he gave the world a new form of melodic phraseology, so to speak; he did much toward the development and establishment of a new form of melodic phrase of the most intensely dramatic character, a form which, since his day, has become peculiarly associated with French opera. He would bring in a puissant phrase, at once melodic and declamatory, just at the crucial point of a song, or scene, and in a way that made its effect positively overwhelming. Isabelle's "*Grâce, grâce pour toi-même!*" in *Robert*, is a phrase of this sort; *cela fait explosion*, as the French say, bursts forth unexpectedly and carries everything before it. The characteristic "Meyerbeer phrase" was not very long in crossing the French frontier; hints at it are to be found in

Leonora's "*Prima che d'altrui vivere, io volli tua morir,*" in the fourth act of Verdi's *Trovatore,* and especially in Manrico's agonized response, "*Insano! ed io quest' angelo osava maledir!*" although Verdi has here expressed a warmth of passion quite his own. But, if here in the *Trovatore* one finds hints at Meyerbeer's example, in the other Leonora's "*Deh! non m'abbandonar, pietà di me, Signore,*" in *la Forza del Destino,* you find the whole Meyerbeer himself. And, if this sort of dramatic phrase made its way into Italy through Verdi,—who has from the beginning steadily stood in the van of Italian dramatic composition,—it may be imagined how it spread and grew in France. Perhaps the grandest example of it in Meyerbeer is Fides's "*Que vers le Ciel s'élève ma prière* (in "*Ah! mon fils*") in the *Prophète;* yet even this glorious outburst is surpassed in breadth of melodic style, if not in brilliancy and *éclat,* by Dalila's "*Ah! réponds à ma tendresse,*" in Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila,* written a quarter of a century later.

What I have called the "Meyerbeer phrase" is not, however, the only, nor perhaps even the chief, exponent of his dramatic power as a composer. Upon the whole, it may be said that the true dramatic force of Meyerbeer's music does not reside in intense sporadic outbursts so much as it

does in the great total impression the music produces; he not only had the keenest eye for effective details, but had also a rare power of grasping the general drift of a dramatic plot and reflecting its prime characteristics in his music. To cull a simile from another art, Meyerbeer was especially remarkable for the striking impressiveness and dramatic suggestiveness of his musical backgrounds. Take, for example, *les Huguenots:* from the very first there is an undercurrent of unrest, anxiety, potential turbulence in the music, admirably suggestive of the social and political disquiet of the times in which the scene is laid; the colouring is for the most part sombre, what flashes of light come now and then shine bright against a dark background, and make its darkness all the blacker-seeming; nervous, fitful figures keep cropping up in the medium and lower registers of the orchestra; you feel that you have fallen upon times that are out of joint, that all the *dramatis personæ* are walking on volcanic ground, and that an explosion may come at any moment. A similar background of characteristic suggestiveness is to be found in the music of his other French grand operas, of *Robert le Diable, le Prophète,* and *l'Africaine.*

With all the good and bad sides of Meyerbeer's genius, with all his strength and weakness, his genuine power and studied artificiality, one can

not but recognize in the end that the man, taken as a whole, was one of the greatest figures in the history of the opera. He was not only great, he was distinctly epoch-making; he set his seal upon a whole era of French musico-dramatic production. The history of French grand opera may be divided into four great periods, at the portal of each of which stands the figure of a great dramatic composer; the names of these four men, who successively set and remodelled the form of grand opera in France, and, from the Académie de Musique in Paris, exerted the strongest influence upon dramatic composition all over the musical world, were Jean-Baptiste Lully (1672–1687), Jean-Philippe Rameau (1733–1762), Christoph Willibald, Ritter von Gluck (1774–1779), and Giacomo Meyerbeer (1831–1864).[1] No doubt other men besides these have shown themselves great and original on that famous stage of the Paris Académie de Musique; but none of them really succeeded in definitely fixing, if only for a period, the general formula of French grand opera as they did. Spontini but carried on and further developed the Gluck formula; Auber and Rossini (with *la Muette de Portici* and *Guillaume Tell*) at best

[1] These dates refer, not to the composers' birth and death, but to the first performances of their first and last grand operas at the Académie de Musique.

only lisped and stammered out the formula which Meyerbeer was soon afterwards distinctly to pronounce and firmly establish; Berlioz, albeit by no means so much of an innovator in opera as has sometimes been imagined, was musically too far in advance of his day to hold the boards at the Académie de Musique at all, so that his influence upon the form of French opera was virtually null. And since Meyerbeer, although his formula has been variously modified and stretched by Gounod, Ambroise Thomas, Massenet, and others, no one has yet appeared who could really establish a new one; the Meyerbeer formula still survives in France.[1]

[1] I may now (1894) add as a postscript to this that not only does the Meyerbeer formula still maintain its prestige in France, but that the general character of opera writing in Italy and Germany for the last quarter of a century—as illustrated in the one country by Karl Goldmark, and in the other by Verdi, Ponchielli, and Boïto, not to mention the two newest "one-act" heroes, Mascagni and Leoncavallo—seems to me, after mature consideration, to have been far more distinctly influenced by Meyerbeer than by either Weber or Wagner. The direct Weber influence evaporated in Marschner, Lindpaintner, and the younger Wagner (*Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tannhäuser*); and, in so far as regards Wagner's influence, the most that can be said is that the Meyerbeer formula, in France, Italy, and Germany, has of late years been stretching to a certain extent in a Wagnerian direction, but has as yet exhibited few symptoms of being ready really to *snap*.

JACQUES OFFENBACH

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O shrieking beloved brother-blockheads of Mankind ! let us close those wide mouths of ours ; let us cease shrieking, and begin considering !—THOMAS CARLYLE.

How far human generosity should be allowed to insist on *De mortuis nil, nisi bonum,* to the possible hurt of human justice, may be a matter of opinion. Our finer feelings may at times almost respect those old tombstones which, as Dickens says, "droopingly incline from the perpendicular, as if they were ashamed of the lies they tell." It is, upon the whole, an honest love of fair play that leads us to frown upon hitting a man after he is once hopelessly down. Yet the tardy praise grim Death wrings from lips long used to scolding, is but a transparent make-believe, which cuts a poor figure enough in the presence of the sternest of human realities. Sleek obituary panegyrics are too often the depreciated paper currency of praise. There are times when the truth is more generous than empty eulogizing. Notably, when a man's career

has thrown half the world into hysterics, a return to sober consideration may be a more fitting tribute to his memory than the smooth lying of a hackneyed funeral sermon.

Such a man was Jacques Offenbach.[1] His fortunes in this world were, in one particular, unlike those of most men of genius: he was famous and acclaimed by the masses during his lifetime; but the selecter few for the most part refused his talent that recognition which is, after all, the sweetest praise in the artist's ear. It is only now he is dead that the leaders of musical thought deem him worthy of something better than pooh-poohing, let alone the shrieking reprobation the less stolid of his judges once thought proper to hurl at him. But his death seems both to have calmed his loud defamers and opened the eyes of those who persistently ignored him; the more intelligent are even beginning to ask themselves: Was not he, after all, a man of real genius? Let us see.

To be so far in advance of one's generation as to take the lead in transforming and reforming popular opinion, by setting up new ideals, has been considered the most authentic charter of original genius. Yet, in lack of this high faculty, are there no other attributes by which genius can be recognized? It seems to me that he who can se-

[1] *Obiit*, October 5, 1880.

curely present himself to the world as the incarnation of certain already existing ideas, who can so grasp the gist of this or that popular tendency as to carry it to its farthest conclusion, and give it unmistakably distinct utterance, is by no means devoid of one phase of genius. At worst, it bespeaks a certain amount of genuine power in a man to become supremely fashionable; the ability to lead popular taste is akin to that of leading popular thought and opinion.

Offenbach's talent was of this sort. If any one incline to think the word genius too noble a title to be bestowed upon Offenbach's peculiar gift, let him consider for a moment how widely the man has been imitated, and how far short of the original all copies have fallen; in a word, how unique he was. That musicians of high aim, and music-lovers jealous of the good repute of the art, should have either decried or ignored Offenbach, was perhaps natural. He knew how to give an undeniably low order of music a degree of prominence in the eyes of the world at large, which might easily divert public attention unduly from more serious and worthy phases of the art. Perhaps musicians in general err on the side of adhering to a too rigid standard of criticism. As the State does not levy an income tax upon citizens whose yearly earnings do not reach a certain figure, so are musicians too

prone to look upon all music which does not aim at certain fixed ideals as lying outside the pale of criticism; they acknowledge its existence only when they see it tending to encroach upon their own cherished ground; then they cry out against it as a nuisance, much as the dandy ignores the greasy cad, until the latter happens to tread upon his delicate toes.

Thus musicians and the more serious critics ignored Offenbach until the time when the ever-growing popularity of his works threatened to oust the more "legitimate" lyric drama from its rightful place in the world's attention. Then a terrific outcry was raised, and Offenbach was so thoroughly ostracized from artistic respectability that his name became a byword for anything you please that was æsthetically reprehensible. It must be admitted that this sort of outlawry sat easily enough on him. It is also true that the general taboo pronounced against him had its excusable side. Acknowledged (or unacknowledged) guardians of the public taste did not have to consider very nicely the justice of their verdict from an artistic point of view; for the man's work was unfortunately so open to attack on ethical grounds, that to sneer at his artistic faculty was superfluous, except in so far as it might add spice to the general censure of its moral tendencies. In even the

most unbiassed consideration of Offenbach's works, it is impossible wholly to lose sight of their peculiar ethical character. In his earlier operettas he was innocent enough. A. W. Ambros says :

"The *Mariage aux Lanternes* showed Offenbach to be following in Auber's footsteps. But he was to leave that path soon enough. The abysmal corruption of the Second Empire was not to be served with wit and humour *alone;* it demanded a moral game-flavour—the stronger, the better! Offenbach's comic muse (or whatever the capricious being who inspires him may be called) began to show a more and more distinct faun's smile, and *la Belle Hélène* at last struck the key-note of what has ever since been the prevailing mode with Offenbach, and the *servum pecus imitatorum* who have founded themselves on him."

One may say that this "moral game-flavour" was an integral factor of Offenbach's talent.[1] The man's success depended on it to a notable degree. He was a caricaturist rather than a satirist; the true gist of his humour lay in its intrinsic laughableness, not in its pointing a moral. Offenbach was anything but didactic. In his humour he knew how to appeal to a certain side of our human

[1] Of course it may be claimed that this "game-flavour" is mainly to be laid to the charge of his librettists, Meilhac and Halévy; but apart from the patent fact that it bears Offenbach's endorsement, we must remember that no composer has ever shown himself in closer sympathy with his librettists than he. In his operas the music is so indissolubly wedded to the text and action, that we can not justly consider either apart from the other.

nature which, argue as we may, we must finally acknowledge as a genuine instinct. He took hold of his public by what the French call their inherent *cynisme*—we have no English word which exactly expresses it. Upon the divine head of every ideal, which by its loftiness could stand as a reproach to our human weakness, his cunning hand set the jester's cap and bells, and we suddenly saw all we had hitherto been wont to reverence decked out in such antic fashion, so perverted from its native dignity, that what might else have been a burning sense of our own shortcomings was straightway smothered in unrestrained laughter.

Offenbach's power was, in a sense, Satanic; he might have said, with Mephisto, "*Ich bin der Geist, der stets verneint*"—I am the Spirit that denies. He put the negative sign before all our ideals, and showed us their pictures as reflected in the Devil's mirror.

Émile Zola has given an admirable description of the effect upon the public of this sort of caricature; he does not mention Offenbach by name, but that was not necessary:—

"... From this moment the popularity of the piece was assured; a grand success began to unfold itself. This carnival of the gods—Olympus dragged through the mire, a whole religion, a whole age of poetry scoffed at—seemed an exquisite treat. The literary world of opening nights caught

the fever of irreverence; legend was trampled under foot, antique images broken. Jupiter had the cut of a fool; Mars was well hit off. Royalty became a farce, and the army a laughing-stock. When Jupiter, suddenly smitten with a little washerwoman, began to dance a furious can-can, Simonne, who played the part of the washerwoman, kicked up her heels into the very face of the father of the gods, calling him 'Old Boy' so drolly that mad laughter shook the house. While they were dancing, Phœbus stood treat to bowls of negus for Minerva, and Neptune was installed in the midst of a bevy of seven or eight women who fed him on cookies. Allusions were understood, ribaldries added, inoffensive words perverted from their meaning by exclamations from the stalls. For a long while the public had not wallowed in more disrespectful folly at a theatre. It rested them."

I know of no argument against the immorality of opéra-bouffe of the Offenbach type more convincing than this simple description, the truthfulness of which is too evident to be questioned.

Yet it should be said, in justice, that the ethical point of view is the only one from which Offenbach can be utterly condemned. Schopenhauer has said :—

"The origin of the Laughable is always the paradoxical, and hence unexpected, subsumption of an object (*Gegenstand*) under a conception (*Begriff*) with which it is really irreconcilable; and the phenomenon of laughter always indicates the sudden perception of an incongruity between such a conception and the real object which is comprehended

under it; that is to say, between the Abstract and the Perceptible (*dem Anschaulichen*)."

By the light of this definition of the laughable, or comic, we can appreciate the profound meaning of another saying of the same philosopher. He says (I quote from memory) that the well-known tendency of men to indulge themselves in slippery joking on the marriage relation, and all that pertains to the same, springs from their intuitive recognition of this relation as the most entirely serious business of life, and the one fraught with the most momentous consequences to human society. To treat this most solemn theme lightly is, therefore, to do the most incongruous thing in our power, and this incongruity is really the acme of the comic; to be laughed at, however, only by him who forgets that the ghastly joke tells most against himself, or, as Wagner poetically puts it, by him who "hears not his own shrieks of pain, the while he tears his own flesh."

If the indecency—to use no worse word—of much of Offenbach's humour is ethically condemnable, it yet has its artistic side. If the word *delicacy* can be used at all in such a connection, it may be said that this peculiar game-flavour is the most delicate part of Offenbach's comic faculty, the only part that is not of the nature of broad caricature and farce. Here he shows genuine subtlety and

pithiness of innuendo. We in America have seldom had an opportunity to judge this side of Offenbach aright. The same may be said of England and Germany, with the exception, so Eduard Hanslick tells us, of one theatre in Vienna. Bouffe actors, and especially bouffe actresses, throw off all restraint, as a rule, as soon as they leave Paris.[1] They seem to feel that their finer deviltry would be lost upon any but a Paris audience, and become coarse and vulgar in consequence. Any one who remembers the world-wide difference between Schneider at the Princess's in London, and Schneider at the Variétés in Paris, will appreciate the justice of this criticism.[2]

[1] It may be doubted whether Offenbach opéra-bouffe ever flourished very brilliantly in the French provinces; at best, it must have been generally looked upon as rather of the nature of "forbidden fruit" there.

[2] I can not refrain now (1894) from adding a word or two about this wonderful artist. Hortense Schneider may be looked back upon as the true living incarnation of Offenbach opéra-bouffe; in her way, she was as astounding a phenomenon as Offenbach himself. She had all the attributes of a thoroughly great actress: personal beauty and grace, impeccable distinction of bearing, the most irresistible native *vis comica*, a touch of very true and searching pathos, magnetism, charm, vivacity, and a technique that gave evidence of the most thorough schooling. She did everything with the authority of a master; she could skip with lightning swiftness from queenly dignity to *canaille* sauciness, and recover herself again in a flash. Her lightness of touch, the keen delicacy of her innuendo, were incomparable. To see her Grande Duchesse, when at her best, was to see an exquisitely finished and pungent piece of art. She had her audience under her thumb, and could do with it what she pleased. I remember one day, in the winter of 1890–91, at Francisque Sarcey's breakfast-table, when the company was composed of actors and

But it must be acknowledged that, clever as Offenbach was as a humourist, he was still cleverer as a musician. His musical faculty did not show itself very early in life, which is somewhat strange, as men of such absolute spontaneity and originality of musical invention commonly begin young. Offenbach's father, who was Cantor at the synagogue in Cologne, always supposed that an elder brother, who showed quite a pretty talent on the violin, was to be the musician of the family. The only talent the younger "Jakob" had as a boy—so a friend of the family relates—was that of balancing a lithe wire cane on the tip of his nose. But the music was to come with time; and now that we can look calmly back upon the man's career, we can appreciate how unique his talent, or genius, was.

That nothing save Offenbach's own well-nigh boundless vanity could ever imagine that he reached a high musical plane, need hardly be said. His musical "learning" was infinitesimal; so soon as he attempted any complex, or even any serious, musical task, he found himself pretty well at a loss. In this respect he resembled some of the old Troubadours,—say, Adam de la Halle,—who sang

actresses from many of the Paris theatres, *sociétaires* and *pensionnaires* of the Comédie-Française, managers, and dramatic critics; the conversation happened to turn to Schneider, whom I remembered well in 1869–70, and every one present, old enough to remember her likewise, agreed that she was a *grande artiste* in the fullest sense of the term.

as the bird sings when they wrote songs, but made a dire mess of it when they turned to counterpoint. Yet in his small way Offenbach possessed a power akin to what, in a composer of higher flight, would be called a rare mastery over musical form. In some of his finales, many of which are quite long, he shows an unflagging power of keeping the music a-going that many a contemporary composer of much higher stamp might well have envied him. The first finale in *la Périchole,* for instance, is planned out in quite a masterly way, and is carried through musically with infinite skill. His melodic invention was great, and he seldom wrote a phrase that did not bear the unmistakable impress of his individuality. That piquant, rollicking, *canaille* rhythm of his has hardly ever been caught by any of his imitators. His melodies have been called vulgar; well, compared with Mozart's "*Voi che sapete,*" or "*Finch' han dal vino,*" they are. But vulgar is rather a dull word to apply to Offenbach's music; it is too *spirituelle* for that. The word *canaille,* as opposed to *bourgeois,* better expresses it. "*C'est une musique de saltimbanque, si vous voulez; mais ce n'est pas une musique d'épicier,*" said a French critic,—a phrase the subtile meaning of which is wholly lost in English. Indeed it takes the French language adequately to describe a talent so thoroughly Parisian as Offenbach's. Per-

haps I can give the English-speaking reader no better clew to its meaning than by asking him to compare the jiggy little melody in the overture to Flotow's *Stradella* with "*Quand les gens de la noce*" in Offenbach's *la jolie Parfumeuse*. If there be one thing in which Offenbach's music is more lacking than in another, it is that essentially mediocre quality we call *respectability;* he was no "gig-man!" His music bears the stamp of that curious return to Arcadian simplicity and freedom in the midst of modern social machinery which is known as Bohemianism. *La vie de Bohème,* that strange idyl in which bricks and mortar stand for trees and hedges, asphalt and cobble-stones take the place of corn-fields and green meadows, and gas and tallow dips do the work of the eternal stars, breathes the peculiar atmosphere which encompasses Offenbach's melody; it has all its grace, all its audacity, all its piquancy. Zola speaks of one of his characters having "*cette adorable laideur de gamine parisienne,*"—that adorable ugliness of the Parisian she-ragamuffin; and, when we are told that Offenbach's music is vulgar, we can say that it has all the "adorable" *canaille* zest of social Bohemia.

In one respect Offenbach was thoroughly the artist: he had the true artist's conscientiousness and respect for his work. Those flippant little

tunes of his, which sound as if they had sprouted from his brain between a glass of punch and a cigarette, represent a vast amount of honest labour. We often talk of spontaneous inspiration as if genius had nothing to do but to let works of art flow out of itself as water runs from a hydrant, by simply turning a faucet. This is not the way genius works; the germ of the masterpiece does come spontaneously, no one knows how nor whence; but, to make this germ grow, to make the inspiration assume a worthy and organic shape, takes work. People hear of the lazy ease with which Rossini wrote many of his most entrancing compositions, and are like to swoon with admiration at such facility of invention. If Rossini really did write these things *easily*, the less artist he; he cheated the world out of half the legitimate fruits of his genius.

Offenbach never tired of retouching, remodelling, elaborating his melodies until he had got them just right. Never was composer more earnest in his endeavours exactly to suit his music to the dramatic situation; the melody and rhythm must fit the text and action to a T. Lucky that his vanity led him to take himself as seriously as he did, really to imagine himself a musical heavyweight! Had he written as flippantly as he was destined to be listened to, he would have done

nothing worth anybody's notice. It was only the sincerest work that could produce music so individual, so piquant, so inimitable as his. You can tell it anywhere. His imitators, Hervé and Lecocq, are better musicians than he; but they have not caught his accent, nor reproduced the snap of his rhythms; his exquisite sense of humour is foreign to their writings. When they parody a great composer they give us a clever imitation at best; but when Offenbach caricatures the style of some famous man, we well-nigh roll on the ground with laughter. There is nothing funnier in all music than some of the passages in which he hits off Meyerbeer. What musician with a grain of humour in his composition can hear the recitative, "*Que veut dire ce double cri?*" and the ensuing chorus on two contrasted themes, "*Ah! la bonne aubaine,*" in the last act of *les Brigands,* without laughing heartily? It turns the ponderously dramatic Meyerbeer inside out! How the good Hérold would have roared to hear the wild fun Offenbach pokes at his overture to *Zampa* in *le Corsaire noir!* But, apart from this sort of parody, Offenbach could be funny in other ways; take the first finale in *la Périchole* as an example. Sometimes, to be sure, his fun is rather cheap and tricky; as in the ensemble-piece in the second act of *la Périchole,* where, half for the ridiculousness

of the thing, half to fill out the rhythm of his music, he splits up "*au cachot qu'on rêserve aux maris rêcalcitrants*" into :

Aux maris *ré-*, aux maris *cal-*,
Aux maris *ci-*, aux maris *trants*,
Aux maris récalcitrants!

But he does not descend to this sort of thing often ; his fun usually resides either in his music itself, or else in the way it adds point and zest to the humour of the text or situation. Still, although undeniably great as a musical humourist, Offenbach's genius shows itself most strikingly in his cleverness as a caricaturist. Of his power in the field of caricature and parody Ambros says :—

"The French are masters in this sort of comic production (think, for instance, of Grandville's drawings and the well-known busts by Dantan, among a host of others), and Offenbach has caught their idea and applied it to music. This decided, and surely by no means despicable, talent with which Offenbach was endowed, and has cultivated in the fittest place in the world, namely, in Paris, has led him, even in his choice of subjects, to enter upon a path in which this talent of his can exercise itself in the most brilliant manner. Rossini's Doctor Bartolo is really a second Cato when brought into comparison with the mad-cap figures that go rollicking about in *Barbe-Bleu*, *la Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein*, or *la Princesse de Trébizonde*. We may shake our heads never so suspiciously in the midst of this mad world of grimaces, in this antic carnival of the mind, but we can not help feeling

cheerfully stimulated, and the accusation we are on the point of making is stifled in the unquenchable laughter into which we break out in spite of ourselves. These musical farces have, after all, a significance of their own as works of art, in the history of music; by which I do not mean to say they are classic music of permanent value. Offenbach is an original, and, if not precisely praiseworthy, nor in any way a model for general imitation, he is yet a remarkable phenomenon of his kind."

Offenbach's career, like that of some other great men, may be divided into three periods. As a young man, he wrote opera after opera, without succeeding in finding favour in the eyes of any Paris manager. In desperation he set up a little theatre of his own in the Champs-Élysées, in 1855 (the year of the International Exhibition), at which he produced a host of one-act pieces. It was a lucky move on his part; for he at last hit upon a style wholly congenial to his peculiar talent, and his recognition by the public dates from this year. *Le Mariage aux Lanternes, Monsieur et Madame Denis, la Chanson de Fortunio, les deux Aveugles,* and other things of the sort, earned him quite a solid reputation. His possible dangerous side had not yet shown itself, and he won ready recognition from musicians; Rossini, the man of all others to detect the pure gold in his talent, laughingly dubbed him

"the Mozart of the Champs-Élysées." Hanslick says :

"Of all Offenbach's works, the group of one-act pieces interspersed with songs, with their irresistible humour and perfect form, please us to-day more than any others. How many potentates of *la haute critique* would not fain persuade themselves and others that such trifles are easily written! Yes, so they are for one gifted by the grace of God. But why is this gift so rare ?"

It was with the works of his second period—which may be roughly dated as beginning with the year 1860—that Offenbach really founded the species of musico-dramatic art known as opéra-bouffe. In 1858 his *Orphée aux Enfers* was brought out at the Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens, and with this, *la Belle Hélène, Barbe-Bleue, Geneviève de Brabant, la Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* (Théâtre des Variétés, 1867), and other works he entered upon larger musical and comic domain. The development of his style was quite proportionate to the growth of his task ; in these operas his power as a caricaturist shows itself in all its glory. To quote Ambros once more :

"Offenbach, with the peculiar tendency of his talent, has trod the field of parody *con amore* and, considering his success with the public, with very firm step. The antique world of the gods (Orpheus), the world of Heroes (Helen), the Arcadian Shepherd-world (Daphnis and Chloë), mediæ-

val Romance (Genevieve), even specifically Venetian Romance (Bridge of Sighs), have all had to submit to being led up to his distorting mirror, and to grin back upon us in comically grotesque grimaces. The matter is not so unsuspicious and innocent as it looks. All the material which artists have hitherto turned to account, in which they have sought their ideals, is here pushed *ad absurdum;* we feel as if Mephisto, under the elegant mask of a 'man of the times,' were sardonically smiling at us, and asking us if the whole bag and baggage of antiquity and romance be really worth a rap. Offenbach has not yet parodied Dante's *Divina Commedia;* but who knows what may come to pass? What will be left for him to do, if a *tabula rasa* is made in this fashion? As a last resort, the jubilant can can, which exultingly throws up its legs toward the Heaven to which others raise their arms in adoration; or, there still remains something 'positive,' *la vie parisienne*, which, by the way, Offenbach has also set to music."

It is quite true that these opéras-bouffes of Offenbach's second period are as attackable on the ground of art ethics as they are on a basis of general morality. If there is abundant excellent humour in them, the element of caricature they contain is essentially cynical, unbelieving, and irreverent; you feel in them that the composer—let alone the librettists—holds nothing sacred. And, though the caricature is astonishingly brilliant, it does leave a questionable taste in the mouth. One can almost agree with the *Augsburger allgemeine Zeitung* that

"The Egyptian plague of the century has been Sardou's and Offenbach's muse: the sensuous destruction of taste through a vulgarity of the stage that is fast becoming classic!"

About 1870, that is, after *la Grande Duchesse*, Offenbach grew less grotesque in his travesties, and evidently began to aim at higher things. It is here that his third period begins. He did not wholly give up his whilom spirit of fantastic caricature, but it was no longer the prime moving power in his work. The first few operas of this period are thoroughly charming. Such are *la Périchole* (which belongs to his third period by its character, if not quite by its date, 1868), *la Princesse de Trébizonde*, *la Vie parisienne* (in which he relapses somewhat into his second manner), and, above all, *Vert-Vert*, to my mind his most entirely delightful work. When he tried to mount still higher in the scale, as in *Barkouf* (1860) and *Robinson Crusoë* (1867), he failed signally; he could not walk securely in the higher forms of composition. Almost as disastrous were his attempts at combining opéra-bouffe with the spectacular ballet-drama of the *Black Crook* sort. Such hybrid forms as his remodelled version of *Orphée aux Enfers* (written for the new Théâtre de la Gaîté in 1874), *Fantasio*, *la Boule de Neige*, *le Corsaire noir* (written for Vienna in 1872), and *le Roi Carotte* are hardly worthy of his genius;

for one thing, the libretti were out of his peculiar vein. There is, however, much charming music in these operas; once, indeed, in *le Roi Carotte*, he almost rises to the impressive pitch, in the quartet among the ruins of Pompeii:

> "Débris dont l'aspect nous transporte
> Aux grands jours d'un peuple effacé!"

The duet of peddlers, "*Nous venons du fin fond de la Perse,*" in the same opera is enchantingly graceful, and he has perhaps never shown more irresistible verve and *entrain* than in the railway song, "*La locomotive.*"

Les Brigands (1869) is an almost complete return to his second manner, after *la Périchole*, albeit some numbers in it are quite elaborate. It, as well as most of his latest works, shows how well Offenbach appreciated his real power. If in these operas, *la jolie Parfumeuse* (1873), *Madame l'Archiduc* (1874), *la Boulangère a des écus* (1875), *Madame Favart* (1878), *la Fille du Tambour-Major* (1879), and one or two others, he shows signs of his spring of melody running dry, he only plagiarized himself; he remained original to the end, always unique and inimitable.

What makes Offenbach's future popularity—what we call his "immortality"—very questionable is the unfortunate fact that the special pub-

lic for whom he wrote really cared more for the "game-flavour" in his operas than for their music, or their intrinsic comicality. People who go to the theatre in this frame of mind must be continually served with novelties. Thus Offenbach, even before his death, had begun to go out of fashion in Paris, and his inferior imitators are now more successful with the public than he—they are newer! And if Offenbach is looked upon coldly at headquarters, there is but little hope for his enduring popularity elsewhere. His opéras-bouffes are "suspicious" articles at best; and their music is too firmly wedded to the text to hope to live apart from it.

TWO MODERN CLASSICISTS

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"*Quot homines, tot sententiæ*" is a saw the application of which might well be extended beyond its current limits. It is not only upon our opinions that we can not escape setting at least a faint stamp of our own individuality,—though this impress may often seem obliterated by our modes of expressing them,—but our understanding, our perceptions, our very seeing and hearing are indefeasibly and inveterately our own. Language is at best a makeshift by which we seek to impart to others an approximate notion of our meaning; but, use it as we may, there is always room for doubt as to whether we have really made ourselves understood. That which we call a word is but the shadow of our thought; it may mean this to us, but that to another. Written language, unaided as it is by the plastic imagery of gesture and the innuendo of emphasis, is an especially rough tool; we write a word, and every reader makes of it what he can—lucky for us if he have the honesty not to make of it what he please! The idea-

conveying force of the word will be what it means to him, not what it means to us. If we would be distinctly understood, we must beat about the bush and explain ourselves; our word, left to itself, will have as many meanings as there are men who read it.

But, to quit generalities and come down to a definite point, how many different meanings in as many minds has not this one word "classicism!" *Classic, classicism, classicist,* have grown to be very vague terms. To those who look for the meaning of a word in its etymology they are impregnated with a flavour of the academy, they reek with associations with the categorical imperative, the "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" of the schools. To others they convey an idea of authority based on a survival after long sifting and a gradual recognition of what is fine, worthy, and, as the Germans say, *mustergiltig.* To others, again, they imply merely something old, that was doubtless admirable once, but has had its day like other dogs, and should by rights be obsolete now. And who shall say that any of these interpretations is wholly without warrant? What we call a "classic" has become so in virtue of being recognized as fine and worthy by successive generations, and should be looked upon as a model in its way, as far as it goes; being a model, it naturally has

been held up as such by the schools, and departure from its scheme has been deprecated, with more or less reason. Again, as it is of necessity old, inspired by the afflatus of a time when the conditions of life, thought, and even emotion were different from ours, when men had other ideals than ours, is there not unavoidably an element of obsolescence in it? May we not assume that its mature growth, like all mature growth, has brought with it the potentiality of decay? All these meanings of "classic" and "classicism" have truth in them; it is only by holding too fast by one, to the exclusion of the others, that we run the risk of error.

Yet, although these interpretations of the word "classicism" are all more or less true, they are still too general and vague for my present purpose. If I have dwelt on them at all, it was to ward off at the outset any prejudice, any foregone conclusion, in the mind of my readers—either in the way of partisanship or opposition, *pro* or *con*—by showing that no single one of them covers the whole ground; and that, consequently, so soon as we hold fast by the special truth contained or implied in one, discarding that implied in the others, we thereby place our chosen truth as it were *in vacuo*, thus inviting error to flow in and surround it. I would address myself here neither to the

enthusiasm of the so-called classicist, nor to the militant scorn of the modern come-outer; I would as far as possible paint a faithful picture of something that has been and the true significance of which seems to me of lasting importance.

To my present purpose neither the authority, the *Mustergiltigkeit* ("model-worthiness"), nor the age and possible obsolescence of musical classicism is of any consequence whatever; I wish to look at the subject from a totally different point of view. I would specify what the true gist, the quintessence in the last analysis, of musical classicism was in its heyday, apart from all definitions, with all that was merely external and unessential eliminated. What I speak of is an æsthetic point of view which history shows us was the dominant one during the periods in which the great masterpieces were written which are by common consent called classic to-day. And, in examining this point of view, I trust far less to the evidence furnished by anything of the didactic sort written or read during the periods to which I refer than to the internal evidence of the master-works themselves.

If it be true of any art that its real essence is the expression of emotion, this is doubly true of the art of music. And it may be well to state here that in all epochs in the history of music

which have since been rated as classic—the great Italian period of strict vocal counterpoint, from the immediate forerunners of Palestrina, the two Gabrielis, and Orlando Lasso down to such decadents as Orazio Benevoli (a period extending from early in the sixteenth century to near the close of the seventeenth); the great "Neapolitan" period of opera and oratorio writing, from Alessandro Scarlatti down to Pergolesi and Sarti; and the great German period, from Sebastian Bach and Handel down to Beethoven—the art of music was unhesitatingly looked upon as distinctly an independent art. The idea that music was an art immediately dependent on poetry was that of the ancient Greeks; it cropped up again for a while under the Florentine Music Reform of the early part of the seventeenth century, and has since made its reappearance with Richard Wagner; but it had absolutely nothing to do with any period or school generally or properly known as classic. In all classic epochs the art of music was regarded as an art by itself, following its own course of development, and subject to its own inherent laws. This was one part of the classic point of view; it was axiomatic. But, based on this axiom, the true quintessence of the classic point of view was this: that in music—as in the other fine arts—the expression of emotion must be realized through per-

fect beauty of form and a finely and stoutly organized construction. The recognition of the indispensableness of this, so to speak, "architectural" side of music was the most distinctive and characteristic mark of the classical point of view; as I have said, it is the very quintessence of classicism.

It is in this sense, and in this sense alone, that I shall use the words *classic, classicism,* and *classicist* in the present essay. In contradistinction to classicism, I would take musical "romanticism" to imply the aim to express emotion in music by more or less picturesque and suggestive means, by the imitation or suggestion of natural (extra-musical) modes of expression, in short, by any means in the power of the art not necessarily connected with beauty of form and stoutness or symmetry of organic structure. By this I do not mean that the modes of expression peculiarly characteristic of musical romanticism are necessarily inimical to or discrepant with beauty of form or stoutness and symmetry of organism; the two circles of connotation of "classicism" and "romanticism" may intersect, and a certain domain be common to both; the two elements may pull together toward one and the same artistic goal. But, for the sake of clearness, I here limit the meaning of each of the two terms to that which is distinctively characteristic, and hence essential, in it. I take classicism

to imply the endeavour to express emotion musically through beauty of form and stoutness and symmetry of organic construction; romanticism, the endeavour to express emotion by other musical means, for the present no matter what.

The last great classic master in music, universally recognized as such, was Felix Mendelssohn. It is true that he was more famous in his own day, and is to a great extent so still, as a romanticist than as a classicist; indeed he was both. But he was distinctly a classicist *jusqu'au bout des ongles;* strongly romantic as his native bent was, and full rein as he gave it for his time, he never indulged it at the expense of his classicism. With all his imaginative romanticism, he was and remains the last world-famous classic composer, so far. His classicism and romanticism went hand in hand, and were, like Sebastian Bach's, in perfect equilibrium. Robert Schumann can not compare with him in this respect; with Schumann the romantic side preponderated over the classic. Even if we admit that his artistic aims may have been as classic in spirit as Mendelssohn's—which a careful study of his works gives some reason for believing—the accident of lacking early training made him far less in condition to compass them than Mendelssohn, whose technical musical education was

phenomenally thorough. Perfection of musical form was something that Schumann always had to struggle for; with Mendelssohn it was a second nature.

But if Mendelssohn was the last universally recognized great musical classicist, there were two men, younger than he and less widely famous, whose lives were intimately associated with musical life in Boston, whose memory is green in the hearts of many of us, and in whom the spirit of the truest classicism still breathed in as perfect purity as in Mendelssohn himself: Robert Franz and Otto Dresel. They were stanch and life-long friends; their agreement on musical subjects was as complete as their friendship; they both worked together toward the same end, though they lived long apart; neither of the two gave anything to the world without its passing through the ordeal of the other's criticism; they died within two years of each other. It is well to speak of them together.

In both of these men was to be found, in its highest perfection, what I will call, for lack of a better name, the sense for musical beauty; the keenest sense for beauty of expression, beauty of form, proportion, and colour. And, so strong was this sense in them, so imperative in its demands, that neither of them could be content unless the whole

of his sense for beauty was satisfied. Beauty of form alone was not enough for them; truth and poignancy of expression, divorced from beauty of form, left them with the feeling that something indispensable was lacking; beauty of detail—in melody, harmony, or modulation—left them cold, unless there were also coherency of development and symmetry of design. Without beauty of colour (a beautiful quality of tone) their delight in music was sorely marred. For them music must fulfil all the demands a complete and spherical æsthetic sense could make upon it. I must own that I was rather surprised to find in Dresel—whom I knew personally and intimately, for with Franz I had only two or three years' intercourse by letter—so keen a delight in musical colour, to find him make such severe demands upon music in this respect. In Boston he had the name of being rather "grim" in his tastes, and I knew his sense for form was so keen and fastidious that I thought it likely enough his demands upon beauty of clang-tint might be less exorbitant. But no: a disagreeable voice, a dry-toned pianoforte, a poor violin, unbeautiful orchestration, offended his ear as unpardonably as it could that of the veriest colour-epicure in music; Paderewski himself could not surpass him in fineness of musical colour-sense. And speaking of the great Polish pianist (whom,

by the way, he never heard) reminds me of something I heard Dresel say one day, in talking of pianoforte playing:

"I have heard almost all the great pianists; but of the whole lot I can think of only two whom I should call really remarkable for beauty of touch: Thalberg and Rubinstein."

"How about Gottschalk?" I suggested.

"Ah! yes, I had forgotten him; he certainly belongs with the other two; his tone on the pianoforte was phenomenally fine!"

In a similar way I was somewhat surprised at first at the high value he set upon emotional expressiveness in music, especially upon the expression of individual emotion, upon the emotional personality and temperament of a composer. To be sure, these surprises came at a time when I knew him far less well than I did afterwards, near the beginning of our musical friendship, when I still had to take him largely for what his reputation with music-lovers in general painted him to be—something of a "dry" musical formalist. Yet even after I had become better acquainted with the emotional, romantic side of his nature, there were certain points in him that I still failed to understand; points which seemed to me not to harmonize well with the rest of him. Indeed, to his death, I could never explain the to me ex-

traordinarily cool attitude he assumed toward Gluck's operas and the works of the older Italian contrapuntists, Palestrina, the Naninis, and others of that school. The Gluck matter, to be sure, did not trouble me overmuch; but, as for Palestrina and his contemporaries, it seemed to me to border on the illogical for an ardent Bach and Handel worshipper like Dresel to ignore this older music, which was really one of the main foundations of the great Germans' art. I never could get him to talk long enough on the subject, which evidently did not interest him in the least, to give me any clue to his inexplicable feelings in the matter. It was only after his death that Franz, to whom I had written on the subject, suggested an explanation that made me begin to see clearly into it. In a letter dated October 31, 1890, Franz answered my questions as follows:

"The questions you ask are not easy to answer. But I would remark before all things that it can not be required of a musician to bring an equal interest to bear upon *all* art-phenomena, a requirement which is no doubt a *conditio sine qua non* for the historian, not for the musician, for a life-time would hardly suffice for the intensive study of them. Friend Dresel was, to be sure, guilty of many a harshness in his judgments, which unfortunately led superficial people to charge him with one-sided narrowness. I myself have not fared better! I never had any talk with Dresel about his attitude toward Gluck and the old Italian school, so I am

in no condition to give you any information about his aversion. Yet I can very well imagine that he did not sympathize with the frequent over-estimates of Gluck's artistic expression. The somewhat cold objectiveness to which the subjects he treated forced this master could not possibly be sympathetic to so subjectively disposed an individual as Dresel unquestionably was—his cool sympathy is only thus to be explained. He seems to have assumed a similar, perhaps a harsher, attitude toward the old Italian school. In it the personal element withdraws almost wholly into the background, and is overwhelmed by the demands of the Catholic Church, which, as you know, does not consider the individual of any account. The expression of the masters of this school thus became so typical that one has some difficulty in distinguishing between, for example, the grand works of Palestrina. It was Protestantism that first loosed musicians' tongues; for in it the personal element, in contradistinction to the typical, gets its rights. The musical culmination of the liberated spirits is to be discerned in Bach and Handel—in both of them does the 'Ego' celebrate its most brilliant triumphs. Nowadays we are told to fall back solely upon ourselves, a fact which has already led to a subjectivism that makes one's flesh creep. In my opinion the individual element should subordinate itself to the universal, in which the artistic spirit of the noblest sort attains to self-consciousness; and here it finds its limit. He who disregards this limit will sooner or later come to grief. The great crowd that rule the roast to-day should naturally be sharply distinguished from this 'universal;' for them everything is sensual pleasure, and they have no inkling of a *katharsis* in which, and in which alone, the true blessings of art are realized. After the crowd was emancipated, even

in its relations to music, . . . then began the downfall, about which only blindness can have any doubts.

"These cursory remarks to a certain extent explain Dresel's attitude. His negative judgment on Gluck and the old Italian school is but the outcome of a passionately mobile inner nature, for which, in neither case, does the blood pulsate quickly enough, and one that could not possibly come to an understanding with the false objectiveness of our doctrinarians. Dresel's opposition to the neo-Germanic school, too, has its interesting side. Its intolerance of all barriers (*ihre Schrankenlosigkeit*) was necessarily antipathetic to his measure-loving nature; in which matter he may perhaps now and then have overshot the mark."

I quote this merely to show that Dresel was very far from being the "dry formalist" in music that many thought him. In truth, the romantic side of his nature was as fully developed as that in any of the musical "new lights" of to-day; only with him it went hand in hand with, and was counterpoised by, an equally well developed spirit of classicism. And what was true of Dresel in this respect was quite as true of Franz; in many of his long musical talks with me, the former continually quoted Franz, not as authority, but to show that he himself was not alone in his views.

What separates the classicism, the sense for beauty of musical form and proportion, of Franz and Dresel from that of almost all "classicists" to-day—and the spirit of musical classicism, if

possibly obsolescent, is by no means quite so dead yet as some persons would have us believe—what made them, in a sense, the last of the Mohicans of a now by-gone period, is more a difference in kind than in degree. I do not think it any exaggeration to say that their perfect purity, chasteness, and nice discrimination of specifically musical sense are now a thing of the past. Our musical instincts nowadays run in other channels; we follow other ideals, and are not only willing, but eager, to sacrifice things to them that our fathers would not have consented to forego. For the absolute fineness and delicacy of musical sense of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Cherubini, and Mendelssohn, we have no doubt substituted something else; we can stand things —ay, and take delight in them, too—that would have set their teeth on edge; we can find a certain ideal coherency, of mood, poetic or dramatic purpose, or emotional expression, in things that would doubtless have struck them as utterly chaotic. I am not even prepared to deny that our modern musical sense may have, or may be developing into acquiring, a somewhat larger scope than theirs; but that it has not the perfect fineness of fibre of theirs I am sure. I am not criticising either them or us; I am merely stating what seems to me an undeniable fact. No doubt there

are many musicians, especially of the older generation, now alive (albeit, fewer than is generally supposed) who have enough of this old fineness and purity of musical sense left to know what it is; but those of them in whom it still has sufficient vitality for them to make its complete satisfaction a *sine qua non* of musical enjoyment must be exceedingly few and far between. Franz and Dresel were the last prominent figures in that goodly company of musical purists; with their death the old fineness of musical sense became virtually extinct. And if I call them purists, I do so hesitatingly, and because I can think of no better term. In the invidious sense, they were really not purists at all; for they did not throw greater stress upon purity of form and style than upon other elements in the art. Nothing was farther from their nature than æsthetic dandyism; only for them purity of form and style was a *sine qua non*.

Of the two, Franz alone was a creator. Dresel, to be sure, composed to a certain extent, and what he wrote was often surpassingly fine; but in him the spirit of self-criticism was stronger than the creative impulse. After publishing a few things, a pianoforte trio and some smaller pieces, when still a young man, he kept countless songs in his portfolio, waiting for the time when his own mu-

sical sense should have sufficiently matured for him to trust it implicitly; he would give nothing to the public that he might be sorry for or ashamed of later. He had a horror of letting anything callow go on record; he was not content with satisfying his ideal for the time being, but must wait until he could be sure of satisfying his perfected and firmly grounded ideal. And the maturing process in him went on almost indefinitely; it seemed as if it would never end; until at last, shortly before his death, he did publish one small book of songs—songs written years before, which had survived decades of cumulative self-criticism, and which he was at last willing to father as something worth doing. The wonderful beauty of these songs might make one lament that Dresel kept them back so long, instead of giving them to the world at once, and making them the point of departure for flights into other and loftier regions of composition, did one not recognize the fact that, where genius is truly creative, the creative instinct is ever stronger than that of self-criticism, and has in itself a certain inborn fearlessness that prompts it to compose, and give to the world without regard for consequences. The man of genuine creative genius can not help flooding the world with his creations. He may not, and probably does not, satisfy his own highest ideal;

but that matters little to him; he has done his best for the nonce, and can not wait to work over it longer; he must give it to the world for what it is worth, and try to do better next time. That Dresel had not creative genius of this sort seems evident enough; and we should be thankful for the beauty of the few songs he did persuade himself to publish rather than regret that he did not publish more. Upon the whole, there is no such thing, nor was there ever such a thing, as an unborn master-work; for it is, and ever has been, the prime characteristic of the embryo of a masterpiece that it will and must be born; it struggles uncontrollably toward birth, and nothing under heaven, save fell death alone, can prevent its being born. There is no more futile lamenting on earth than that over the great things this or that man did not do. Devout thankfulness for the little and insignificant things men have not done is infinitely wiser; for it is profoundly true—though the truth thereof is too often overlooked or misappreciated—that in art, as in other matters, the world really wants nothing but masterpieces. All else it is well able to do without.

Franz, on the other hand, distinctly was a creative genius; and, like all true geniuses, as distinguished from men of mere talent, he was a man of progress. He carried the German *Lied* to its high-

est known pitch of perfection. Uniting the purely lyric element one finds in such splendour in Schubert with the wondrously subtile and mobile expressiveness of every varying shade of emotion that characterized Schumann, fusing these two elements so that their union was absolutely—one might say, by a not too daring figure, "chemically"—complete, Franz gave the finishing master touch to the plastic form of the *Lied*. Franz's songs are as truly lyrics, in the most exact sense of the word, as Schubert's; at the same time, they are to the full as emotionally expressive, as picturesquely and poetically suggestive, as vivid pieces of tone-painting, as Schumann's. And, more than this, he has given them the most stoutly organized, pure, and concise form known in song-writing. Of what Schubert and Schumann did before him Franz brought the natural and logical completion; he crowned the edifice.

In thus comparing Franz with Schubert and Schumann as a song-writer, I have intentionally left his own personal individuality out of consideration; I have spoken only of his continuing and completing their work in establishing and perfecting the form of the German *Lied*. But, apart from this, his own genius had the finest, the most unique aroma; it was as individual as that of any man who ever wrote. Indeed, after looking

through all modern art, one finds Franz to stand utterly alone and companionless in one high respect; to find a parallel to the spirit that breathes through his songs, one must go back to the old Elizabethan love poetry; nothing else in our own day has their peculiar aroma. Franz's songs have just that unforced felicity of cadence and expression, that wholesome out-of-door freshness, that refinement without priggishness, warmth without feverishness, above all that native reverence for purity and beauty, that we find in the English love poems of Elizabeth's day. No lover can be too passionate to sing them, no maid too pure to hear them.

Their "vocality," to coin a vile word to fit an abominably abused thing, has often been called in question; indeed Franz's songs are by no means always written according to the rules of the Italian *bel canto*, and it has long been the fashion to consider songs that do not obey these rules as pieces of bad vocal writing. But this objection is really foolish. Because even the finest and best developed vocal technique of great Italian singers is not fully equal to conquering certain technical difficulties in Franz's songs, there is no more reason to call them essentially unvocal and badly written for the voice than there would be for saying that Chopin's nocturnes and preludes are pieces of

bad pianoforte writing because, say, Moscheles or Hummel could not have played them. The only difference is, that the peculiar technique needed to play Chopin has been very fully developed in pianists to-day, whereas the peculiar vocal technique requisite to sing Franz has been only very sparingly developed in singers. And as for *bel canto,* the Franz songs differ diametrically from much of the vocal music written to-day in that they are but seldom declamatory in character, but almost always purely lyrical; they have a *bel canto* of their own—not the Italian, but another—and imperatively demand that it shall be done full justice. The vocal technique required by Franz's songs still remains to a great extent a problem that singers will have to solve for themselves; some few have already solved it, but mastery over it has by no means become general as yet. I myself, *moi qui vous parle,* have heard Franz's songs sung as purely, as smoothly, sustainedly, and with as perfect emission of tone as I ever have "*Casta diva*" or "*Una furtiva lagrima*" by the best Italians. But I admit that it has not been often!

It has been regretted that Franz, as an original creator, confined himself so exclusively to the *Lied,* instead of spreading a wider wing in flight through larger musical domains. His technical equipment was probably more thorough than that of any other

composer of his day. Perhaps he felt the short song to be his most congenial sphere, and had no inner spurrings to attempt larger things. But one may suspect there was something else that kept him from trying the larger forms of vocal composition or any form whatever of instrumental writing. And I am led to guess that this something else may have acted quite as effectually upon Dresel as upon him, preventing him from overstepping the limits of the song, and discouraging Dresel almost wholly from doing original work in any field. To explain what this something, this mysterious influence, was, let me quote again from Franz's letters.

In a letter dated November 23, 1890, after beginning thus :—

"I am very glad that you agree with my explanation of Dresel's attitude. If you lay strong stress upon these points of view in your intended article,[1] many a misunderstanding about our friend will be cured thereby.

"You are quite right in calling Liszt's composing in the archaic style *reflective*, for every imitation drags after itself the loss of naïveté, and thus leaves the domain of all true artistic creation. The Berlin matadors, ———, ———, ———, etc., labour under the same deficit."

He goes on, in reply to some expostulations of mine with the exceedingly black view he had

[1] An article I never wrote, by the way.

taken of the future of the art of music, as follows:—

"So you really believe that the individualism of our day, tearing down all barriers as it is, is but a process of fermentation, the precipitate of which must lead to a clarification promotive of art! If you mean the complete negation thereof, then I agree with you; but if you think a new era of artistic productiveness possible as the result of this clarification, then our views go far asunder. Every development has, like everything in the world, its beginning and its end; the development of the organism of art like the rest. Now, you have only to look at the historical progress of Music to descry in it an uninterrupted chain of perfectionments and retrograde movements. To be sure, instances of disorganization occur, but their place is immediately taken by more vital forms in other domains. Vocal as well as instrumental music has gone through this process; neither of them could ever rise above a culminating point that was always followed by a rapid decadence. Church music lived to have this fate during and after the period of Bach and Handel; then the opera before and after 'Mozart,' whose name I especially emphasize because his genius possessed the highest faculty of dramatic art: 'to create *figures* of flesh and blood;'[1] farther on the epic forms, which culminated in Beethoven; and finally, we have arrived again at the beginning of all art, at the lyric, which seems likewise to have exhausted its springs to the very bottom, in achieving a fusion of poetry and music which can hardly be carried to a higher pitch of intimacy."

[1] This was in allusion to an article of mine in Scribner's Magazine, in which I had spoken of Wagner's having "created figures of flesh and blood."

In another letter, dated May 5, 1892, he says :—

"As I know you from your letters as an optimist incarnate, who even *per tot discrimina rerum* believes in a beautiful future, I will only remark that our art has been, in its noblest results and for divers centuries, its own object, and that it may at last be high time to take in hand the education of human kind, its higher mission. Trash will, of course, be excluded thereby, and what is genuine will come into its rights."

These are but hints ; but they tend to show that Franz was fully persuaded that all forms of composition had been virtually worked out, and nothing new was to be done in them ; the field of original creation in music was closed, or fast closing, except to those adventurous modern spirits to whom pure individualism in expression was acceptable as a worthy aim in art. At any rate, as he himself could not accept the modern idea, the field of original musical creation was effectively closed for him, save in that one still perfectible form, the song. Yet it is easy to see by what he actually did that this beautiful, but narrowly circumscribed, form of composition did not seem to him to give a man of creative genius sufficient scope to make it worth his while to devote his whole life-work to it. Indeed, if we look through the history of music, we can find no single instance of a man of really high creative genius—even among those

to whom we owe the perfection of very small musical forms—devoting himself exclusively to them. Take, for instance, Schubert, to whom we owe the establishment of the *Lied*-form ; probably his most perfect and absolutely original work was done in that form ; but he was not content to apply his genius to it alone, he also worked in the larger fields of the symphony, the sonata, concerted chamber music, church music, and the opera. Take Schumann, who brought the short fugitive pianoforte-piece to such perfection, and may even be said to have created the *genre*—for what Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven had done before him in this line was little more than a hint that something great remained to be done in it, and Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* were rather superficially than essentially a new development, being in reality little or nothing more than the application of the *Lied*-form to pianoforte writing ;[1]—even Schumann could not confine himself to the short *morceau de genre* for pianoforte, but exploited nearly all the largest and highest domains of composition. Chopin himself, who, barring a few songs and a piece or two of concerted chamber music, was exclusively a pianoforte composer, was not content to confine

[1] Saint-Saëns well said that "where Mendelssohn has given us the loveliest musical water-colour sketches, Schumann has cut veritable cameos."

his genius within the limits of the mazurka, the waltz, the nocturne, nor the short free prelude, but must needs apply himself also to the sonata, the concerto, the scherzo, and the longer ballade; and though Chopin brought the nocturne, the mazurka, and the short prelude to a pitch of perfection never equalled before nor since, and his most characteristic work was done in these small forms, he still was not satisfied with limiting himself to them alone. And it would have been strange indeed if a man of Franz's genius had been content to immure himself in the restricted domain of song writing. Yet, as we have seen, he considered other fields of original creative work virtually closed to him. What he did do is well known; and why he did it is at least hinted at in the sentences, "It may at last be high time to take in hand the education of humankind, its (music's) higher mission. Trash will, of course, be excluded thereby, and what is genuine will come into its rights."

There was one high field left for the musician of genius, even of creative genius, a field in which the great Mozart himself had done pioneer work, in which Mendelssohn had laboured, but which had otherwise been left to men of mere talent and insufficient ability. This was the filling-out of the incomplete scores of Bach, Handel, and other great masters of their day. Here was work in the

very highest field still remaining to be done! Nothing could contribute more to the higher musical "education of humankind" than the popularization of Bach and Handel; and by worthily filling out the vacant gaps in their monumental scores, what was "genuine" would be enabled to "come into its rights." I remember Dresel once saying that he considered the completion of Bach's and Handel's scores the highest task now left for musicians to accomplish. One need have little doubt that this feeling, coupled with, and in part springing from, the conviction that all fields for purely original musical creation were virtually worked out and closed, was what impelled both Franz and Dresel to devote the better part of their lives to the work they did on Bach and Handel.

I have but small inclination to examine or criticise this conviction here. I personally can not agree with it; I even find it difficult to imagine it; as Franz said, I still believe in a beautiful future, that the present barrier-spurning spirit of ultra-individualism, with all the chaotic and monstrous phenomena to which it has given birth, is really but a transitory "process of fermentation, the precipitate of which must lead to a clarification promotive of art." And I have perfect faith that the clarification will come in due time. Even the history of music—although it proved the contrary

to Franz—only strengthens my faith, if it in any way needed strengthening. An almost precisely similar "instance of disorganization (*Verwilderung*)" is to be found in the Florentine Music Reform of the seventeenth century; there, too, was a temporary reign of barrier-breaking individualism, an utter subversion of all that was "typical" and "universal." Ask the classicists, the acknowledged great masters, of that day what they thought of Caccini, Peri, and Monteverde, with their *stile rappresentativo* and their establishment of the music-drama, and whether they could see anything in the movement, or in the music that resulted from it, but sheer chaos regained? There was a "process of fermentation" with a vengeance! But the precipitate came, and with it the clarification; music could not remain forever in the amorphous state into which the Florentines had thrown it, for that which has in itself the potency and power of organism tends irrepressibly to develop itself organically. Nay, one may even say with absolute truth that the particular ferment that raised all this Florentine row-di-dow contained the fructifying vital principle that made it possible for Bach and Handel to be born from Palestrina, the Gabrielis, and Orlando Lasso. History has but to repeat itself, and the "clarification" we now look for may come.

But, though one need not agree with the view of the present and future condition of the art of music taken by Franz and Dresel, a conviction so thorough, honest, and unflinchingly lived up to as theirs can not but command the most reverent respect. No matter whether their feeling and arguments convinced you or not, they were every inch true men, men of genuine genius, powerful brains, and wide culture; in short, they were men who abundantly deserved to be listened to. No men that ever lived were less fit subjects for mere poohpoohing. And, when we consider what the results of this artistic conviction of theirs have been, we must find that the world has little cause to be otherwise than profoundly thankful that they were what they were and thought as they did. What they did for the incomplete scores of Bach and Handel is unquestionably to be counted among the things the world really wants, and hence can not do without, as true master work.

The violent controversy between the small Franz party and the far larger "historical" party about the *Bearbeitungsfrage*, the question of filling out the gaps left by the old composers in their scores, is one which I need not go into at great length; many of the arguments on both sides are so inseparably interwoven with musical technicalities as to make their rehearsal out of place here.

But it will be none the less interesting to hear Franz himself talk about it a little; not a few passages in his letters to me give a fine picture of the man himself, of the sturdy fighter for his own principles, unshaken in his faith, if somewhat embittered and turned to causticity by hard usage; these passages also throw light upon the only element in the controversy which I shall permit myself to take up in this essay. In a letter dated August 6, 1889, he writes, in reply to some remarks of mine on the general attitude of musical criticism in this country:

"With us, too, does criticism hold fast with convulsive grip by mere externals in judging of the question of additional accompaniments, and can not get beyond the idea of instrumental retouching. Of the spiritual vitality, the *afflatus divinus*, that everywhere pervades Bach's and Handel's compositions, and to which the complementary additions must in some measure correspond, the gentlemen have no inkling, and have therefore nothing to say on the main point. But this in no wise prevents their incessantly trotting out their *bornées* opinions and looking down with envy upon endeavours that are beyond their miserable powers of comprehension. You are right, too, in saying that the boundless vanity of professional singers bears a substantial part of the blame for the current misapprehensions about Bach's and Handel's airs. These gentry never care for the thing itself, but only for their own personal success. As vocal music since Mozart has its centre of gravity in the *cantilena*, people think they may apply this to compositions of

earlier periods also, which are almost without exception written polyphonically — whereby the remaining web of voices comes off badly enough. But we will not let ourselves be led astray by this crazy company and its adherents, but will now, as heretofore, let the honour be to Truth; it will carry off the palm in the end, in spite of all."

Again, in a letter dated October 8 of the same year, he writes:

"That the Communications about Bach's *Magnificat*[1] do not dissatisfy you rejoices me greatly. The most valuable part of them is probably the side-remarks on the ideal contents (*Gehalt*) of the master's works. If you could occasionally communicate some of these to your fellow-countrymen, you would compel my thanks. I read with astonishment in your letter that the magazines published in America refuse to accept the least word about Sebastian Bach. So there are queer people everywhere—not only here in this country! Bach has a future, like Shakspere; he but honours himself who acts on this point of view.

"You are very right in saying that between the artistic perception and the historico-philological recognition of a fact there yawns a chasm that is hardly to be bridged over. Those who hold to the latter can not even conceive how the historical must always be sublimated in the artistic. In his pamphlet, *Robert Franz in his Additional Accompaniments to Old Vocal Works*, J. Schaeffer, after quoting a few sentences from my Open Letter,[2] goes on to say: 'How sur-

[1] *Mittheilungen über J. S. Bach's Magnificat*, von ROBERT FRANZ; Halle, 1863.

[2] *Offener Brief an Eduard Hanslick über Bearbeitungen älterer Tonwerke, namentlich Bach'scher und Händel'scher Vocalmusik*, von ROBERT FRANZ; Leipzig, 1871.

prisingly exact is the agreement of these sentences with Mattheson's and Heinichen's directions! How deeply is the historian here thrown into the shade by the practical (*ausübenden*) artist! The former, albeit in possession of all historically established facts, remains still blind to them; the latter, perhaps without any sort of suspicion of what stands written in the old books, achieves, through practical experiments and the divining faculty of genius, results which alone prove to be vouched for by history!' Why, it is axiomatic that every working-out of an old composition must penetrate the secret of its style, and so must be historically right. Bach's and Handel's sketches do not endure our modern expression, but must be completed in the forms of the day when they were written. But to this end one need not plough through the musty old books; one has but to question his own artistic conscience. He who does not comprehend that is a blockhead!

"The German historical party think to have an easy job with me by denouncing me to the public as a mere song-scribbler (*Bänkelsänger*), who dares to lay profane hands on Bach and Handel. The fools naturally do not know that my musical developments rest on the basis of polyphonic forms of expression, for they are much too high and mighty to look into such small wares. Luckily, the gentlemen's stupid experiments facilitate our pointing out their sins against those masters. That they were in no condition to refute us has contributed much to swell their wrath. However, many enemies, much honour!"

Again, under date of July 14, 1890, he writes:

"I willingly believe you that the true essence of Bach's music, mystical depth combined with mathematical strict-

ness, was not comprehended by —— in ——, and was shorn over the same comb with common wares. But is it any better in this respect here in this country? How low musical taste has sunk with us may be proved to you by this: that the young director of a famous conservatory dared to proclaim that Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* were 'sheer thoosy-moosy feeling,' and a noted young German author had the impudence to call Schubert's songs 'hand-organ sentimentality.' These are the consequences of modern realism! What our 'strong-minded' folk can not grasp with their fists is cast without further ado into the rubbish-bin! Whither in the world are we steering?

"Half a year ago the musical works of Frederick the Great were published by the firm of Breitkopf & Härtel, by order of Emperor William II., and under the chief supervision of the academic music-historian, Philipp Spitta. All the sonatas are written for flute with figured *continuo*, and therefore necessitate a working-out of the accompaniment. Old Fritz's music is in the main capital, and contains *Sicilianos* such as Handel could not have written more soulfully; in face of such genuine beauty the accompaniment should naturally show no falling-off. But now there has appeared in No. 17 of the *Hamburger Signale* an article which simply annihilates Spitta's edition and proves the bungling character of the working-out by examples in notes—it swarms with 5ths and octaves. The affair makes all the more painful an impression that our young Emperor has presented an *exemplaire de luxe* of his ancestor's compositions to Jules Simon in Paris, where *messieurs les Français* can convince themselves what sort of spirits are cocks of the walk now in musical Germany. The High-School clique, with the renowned Joachim at their head, are naturally in sheer despair, and have reason enough therefor."

Under date of August 16, 1890, he goes on :

"The great Spitta has tried to justify himself in a reply that runs over with futilities. According to his assertion, the accompaniment is the most indifferent matter in the world, which any one is at liberty to treat as he happens to please ; he may make changes at will without thereby injuring the substance of the composition in any way—in short, the scribble is an *oratio pro domo* pronounced by a thoroughly impotent man upon himself. If you will give a glance at my additional accompaniments, you will hardly look upon this domain as of secondary importance. To write in the style of the old masters, which is here absolutely necessary for the sake of unity, is not one of the tasks you can carelessly shake out of your sleeve. Neither does Spitta make any bones of the fact that in those days men of Bach's and Handel's stamp sat accompanying at the *cembalo* or organ ; they did not write out the accompaniment, and must therefore be content with what we botch together in all haste, this way to-day and to-morrow that. Of course with such a dogma Music can be raised out of her hinges—God help our children and grandchildren ! "

The letter dated May 5, 1892, from which I have already quoted (page 225), begins :

"Your letter contains little that is cheering about the condition of music to-day. Communications of the sort in no wise surprise me, however ; for, since the principles have been suspended that ruled artistic expression from Palestrina to Beethoven, phenomena like those you describe must necessarily make their appearance. Up to Beethoven and his epigones people held fast by the idea that melody, har-

mony, and rhythm were the fundamental elements of music; the neo-Germanic school has radically destroyed these and set up in their stead the absolute freedom of the personal element. Men like Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner could to a certain extent compensate for this by the weight of their personality; but the army of those who have followed in their footsteps, not being able to throw such a weight into the scale, have necessarily, in face of this intolerance of all barriers, ushered in universal chaos."

This was elicited by some accounts I had given him of new works of the latest French school that I had heard in Paris, where I had been spending the winter and spring of 1890–91. Later in the same letter he goes on to say as follows:

"The experiment of having the dear public sing, too, in the chorals of the *Matthew-Passion* [1] must have turned out badly enough, for, in his harmonization of them, Bach thought only of an *ideal* congregation. What can have come, for example, of the choral, '*Was mein Gott will, gescheh' allzeit*,' especially at the place '*und züchtiget mit Maassen*'? How much people hang on externalities in the rendering of Bach's and Handel's works has been proved by the fight the London philisterium billed against me about my *Messiah* score. Even E—— P—— did not dive to the heart of the question of additional accompaniments, the restoration of the

[1] This experiment turned out not to be quite so thorough-going as I had supposed before the performance, when I wrote to Franz about it. In some of the performances of the *Passion-Music* given by the Handel & Haydn Society in Boston, the audience was invited to join in singing the melody of some of the chorals—not of all, as I had supposed. Of their singing the harmony there had never been any question whatever.

musical style of the complementary parts, but had only to do with things that lie wholly outside that domain. And yet it is of the highest importance in this matter whether one knows how to write in the style and spirit of the old masters, or not. People ought to thank Heaven that the solution of this difficult problem has been striven after by me in decently fitting forms! I never should have undertaken such work, had it been a question of nothing more than instrumentation, which the first town-piper that came along could have carried out effectively.

"I have just received your article in the Contemporary Review,[1] but must once more lament my being too little a master of the English language to edify myself therewith as it deserves. I shall send it to Dr. Prieger,[2] who will communicate to me the staple of its contents. I am much pleased that you took in the two quotations from my *Communications*, for they contain the quintessence of what is needful for the understanding of Bach's art. But when Herr Hanslick talks about polyphonic style and what hangs together therewith, then I am sick outright! He who hears in Bach's world-famous motet, '*Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*,' nothing but scales running up and down should not let his tongue coquet with the old master's name and expression. On his visit to Leipzig, Mozart had the *voice-parts*—there was no score—laid before him, and cried out enchanted, 'Here at least one can learn something from a man!' How sharply this modesty contrasts with Hanslick's impudent condemnation!"

[1] On Johann Sebastian Bach.

[2] Erich Prieger, who published a few years ago a very able pamphlet abundantly proving the spuriousness of the *St. Luke-Passion*, attributed to Bach by Dr. Philipp Spitta and others before him, and recently published by Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig.

I said I would take up only one point in the controversy between Franz and the German historical party about the additional-accompaniments question: this is the utter misapprehension of Franz's point of view by his opponents. This misapprehension has been so complete, so obstinate, that one is at moments tempted to think there could be nothing but partisan ill-will behind it. Yet I have found it in so many people who were not especially interested in the controversy, who could not possibly have any partisan prejudice in the matter, and were rather inclined to sympathize with Franz than otherwise,—not so much for what he really did as for what they thought he had done,—that it seems to me there is ground for believing the anti-Franzites to be not entirely dishonest. Indeed, it was very noteworthy that the author of one of the exceedingly few obituary notices on Franz that appeared in German newspapers shortly after his death, and of the most glowingly enthusiastic one, too, evidently shared this misapprehension with his most embittered opponents. What this misapprehension is may be seen plainly enough from the passage in the letters just quoted, where Franz says, "With us, too, does criticism hold fast with convulsive grip by mere *externals* in judging of the question of additional accompaniments, and can not get beyond the idea of *instru-*

mental retouching." Even the author of the admiring obituary notice I have just mentioned speaks of his "amplifying the monumental scores of Bach and Handel *to satisfy the greater demands for sonority made by the modern ear.*" Such a statement, coming from an "admirer," was fit to make the good Franz turn in his grave!

Here is not the place to go into the merits of the case; I will merely emphasize the fact that, whereas Franz—and with him Dresel—threw the whole weight of his arguments upon the real gist of the question, upon the *musical style* in which the additional accompaniments should be written, the historical party almost without exception dodged this issue and laid stress upon what instrument, or instruments, the additional accompaniments should be written for. Franz knew as well as anybody that Bach and Handel used to fill out the vacant places they had left in their scores with improvised accompaniments on the organ or clavichord; remember the passage in his letters where he says that "in those days men of Bach's and Handel's stamp sat accompanying at the *cembalo* or organ;" and, if he preferred to write his additional accompaniments for orchestral instruments, instead of the organ or pianoforte (the modern representative of the clavichord, or *cembalo*), it was for reasons amply satisfactory to himself. But

note this: he announced again and again that, if conductors of choral societies did not agree with him in preferring orchestral instruments, but preferred the organ or pianoforte, he was perfectly willing to have them transcribe his additional accompaniments for one or the other of these instruments, so long as they preserved the musical outlines of *what* he had written; that the question of instruments was in his mind one of utterly secondary importance. In one case[1] he even did this work of transcription himself, writing and publishing, beside his orchestral amplification of the score, a separate organ-accompaniment, to be used in connection with Bach's original parts and without his own orchestral additions. But, pay what deference he might to other people's preference for the organ or clavichord, announce as emphatically as he pleased that he was willing to have his orchestral parts played on either of these instruments, and that the *musical style* in which his additional parts were written was all he deemed of essential importance, he but spoke to deaf ears; his opponents refused to see anything in his work but additional instrumentation, orchestral retouching, of the sort Sir Michael Costa permitted himself when he added trombones, bass-tuba, and big drum and cymbals

[1] In his edition of the cantata, "*Sie werden aus Saba Alle kommen.*"

to the *already complete* score of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. *Ils ne sortaient pas de là!*

The reason for this persistent misunderstanding of Franz's principle—apart from partisan obstinacy—was doubtless that hinted at by Franz when he said, "Between the artistic perception and the historico-philological recognition of a fact there yawns a chasm that is hardly to be bridged over." Franz's arguments were all based on his own highly cultivated artistic perceptions, on ideas; those of his opponents, on mere historical data. And the latter could not see that their historical data, the accuracy of which Franz never for a moment called in question, had really nothing to do with what he was talking about. Not being men of musical genius and the keen, profound insight into the genius of others that comes therewith, they could in no wise comprehend either the fineness or the trustworthiness of Franz's perceptions; they were unable to see that, with all their historical and biographical researches, they had sounded the mighty heads of Bach and Handel only wigdeep at best, and that Franz, with his artist's intuition and sympathy, had penetrated not only their mighty brains, but down to their very heart of heart. So all Franz might say about his principles was but Greek to them; they could no more understand him than a Tierra del Fuegian can

understand the subjunctive mood. Again, it is not difficult to see why the arguments of the historical party should have had far more influence upon outsiders in general than those advanced by Franz; the "historical" arguments were all more or less on the principle that "figures can not lie" —they were based on facts, and the public mind is peculiarly open to facts. But Franz's arguments, being based on perceptions and ideas, were of a far more subtile and illusive sort; they were by no means so palpable to popular apprehension. Naturally most music-lovers did not take the trouble to examine into the question very closely; if they cared to look into the matter at all, they did so cursorily, as one would skim over a newspaper. It was perfectly natural for people in this state of mind, when they found that there were two opposing parties, and that one of them based its arguments on uncontroverted facts, to believe that this party must be right.

That Franz's uncompromising classicism should have left him more and more solitary and out of touch with other musicians of his time was unavoidable; this introduced into his life an element of sadness that was still further darkened by his physical infirmity, gradually approaching total deafness. To find that the spirit of the time is not with him, to be more and more forgotten and

ignored as old age advances, is sad for any man of genius; but to find all hands raised against him in a cause not his own, but which he with unselfish reverence has most at heart,—that infuses a drop of bitterness into the cup such as few men could bear the taste of. Here are two letters by Franz, the first of which I will quote entire, for it seems to me the most completely tragic I have ever read. These letters were in reply to my asking him, at the instance of the president of the Handel & Haydn Society of Boston, if he would not write additional accompaniments to Bach's great B minor Mass for that society. He had already written his score to Handel's *Messiah* especially for the Handel & Haydn, and the president empowered me to promise him far greater pecuniary recompense for a similar score to the Mass than the society had been able to offer him for the *Messiah*. Franz's first reply was as follows:

"MY DEAR MR. APTHORP,—

"Honourable to me as the task you promise is, I unfortunately can not accept it. To jot down note-heads with painfully cramped fingers is in itself one of the things at the very thought of which my hair stands on end; when to this is added a wholly destroyed head (*ein völlig destruirter Kopf*), that makes precise thinking impossible, then would it be sheer presumption to undertake a labour that demands the whole man! For the amplifications to the B minor Mass, it is not merely a question of restoring a congruous style, but,

what means far more, of a fruitful and devoted absorption in the poetic essence of this composition ; a working-out of the figured bass according to the mere rules of the craft fails utterly to hit the mark. My reconstructive labours, in so far as Seb. Bach is concerned, have struck out into paths that try to do justice to both demands ; as a dead-tired man I must now leave it to my colleagues whether they will condescend to follow me. That no working by pattern, such as the modern historical party ask for, will suffice here is abundantly proved by the bunglings of the 'artists' who let themselves be guided by those pedantic fools; and to oppose more fitting forms for the B Minor Mass to the above-mentioned bunglings was something for which I had neither incitement nor inclination, at a time when my additional accompaniments were bespattered with mud. Now, at last, people's eyes seem to be opened to the disconsolate quality of those machine-made articles (*jener Machwerke*) ; for in the course of the last several years I have been asked at least a dozen times about additional accompaniments to the B minor Mass. Of course I could give no other information than that contained in the above lines. To be sure, thirty years ago—my ears had not yet refused me their service at that time—the work was performed under my direction with an accompaniment to the first three numbers, the *Credo*, the *Sanctus*, and the *Osanna*, such as the extremest necessity demanded ; but the forms were not ready for the press, and consisted only of fragments of parts,—all else was left for further elaboration. Even to-day I can remember the mystic sounds in the *Incarnatus* that dropped down over the voice-parts like a veil from the clouds! *Tempi passati!*

"Be so kind as to communicate these lines to the president of the Handel & Haydn Society, to whom I permit myself to give the advice—in the interests of the B minor Mass,

you understand—rather to give up the performance than to put it through with a 'bad' organ part[1] that can only injure the wondrous work.

"What on earth has become of your article on Dresel?

"Your ROB. FRANZ."

HALLE, *May* 27, '92.

On my communicating this letter to the president of the Handel & Haydn Society, he begged me to write once more, and ask if the fragmentary parts mentioned therein could not be found and forwarded to Boston, as certainly half a loaf was better than no bread. Franz answered the second time thus:

"MY DEAR MR. APTHORP,—

"I am very sorry to be able to give you no information to correspond to the wishes of the president of the Handel & Haydn Society. Our performance of the B minor Mass came at a time when I was *in initiis* of my labours on additional accompaniments, and I could not turn out anything artistically complete. If I remember aright, little pieces of music paper with the most necessary additions were inserted in the respective orchestral parts; what has become of them, Heaven knows! If the gentlemen are absolutely bent on repeating the wonderful work, then I agree with your opinion to have it performed rather *without* additions than with defective ones. In the former case, one can at least *imagine* what may still be wanting, whereas a working-out according

[1] Franz here seems to have overlooked the fact that I had not written him about a "bad organ-part," but about a "bad organ" (the doleful instrument now in the Boston Music Hall), upon which no organ-part of any description whatever could be effective.

to the ideas of the historians will only result in bunglings that will obliterate the outlines of the original parts themselves. A little while ago I saw some samples of various organ-parts to Bach's church compositions, of which one was ever worse than another; the most wretched of all, however, came from the high and mighty society in Berlin![1]

[Here follows a passage on another subject, too personal for present publication. The letter ends:]

"Of the splendour of your 'Indian summer' I have often read with rapture in the writings of Charles Sealsfield. If one could only see it, too!

"With the fairest greetings,

"Your ROB. FRANZ."

HALLE, *October* 7, 1892.[2]

That Dresel sympathized completely with all Franz's feelings on the additional-accompaniments

[1] This was in response to an account I had given him of an experience of mine in Paris. The Société des Concerts at the Conservatoire had given some wonderfully fine performances of the B minor Mass, almost the only blot on which was the utterly unsatisfactory organ-part. I subsequently ventilated my feelings about this organ-part to M Jules Garcin, the conductor of the society, to which he replied: "I don't blame you in the least; for we were all dissatisfied. But this is how it was: You know we are extremely careful to do everything as correctly as possible at the Conservatoire, so we were particularly anxious to do the B minor Mass according to the best traditions. We therefore sent to Germany for an organ-part, there being none written out in the score; but when it came, we found it so bad that we had to hand it over to M. Guilmant to revise it and make it even harmonically correct!" Remembering Franz's disgust at a copy of the Breitkopf & Härtel edition of Frederick the Great's flute sonatas being sent to Paris, and thus exposed to the scrutiny of French musicians, I wrote him this story.

[2] This, the last letter I ever received from Franz, was written little more than a fortnight before his death, October 24, 1892.

question need not be said again. He was one of the most ardent champions of Franz's scores to Bach's and Handel's works, made himself a masterly pianoforte score from his score to the *Messiah*,[1] and showed in his own pianoforte accompaniments to many of the airs from Handel's oratorios and Italian operas how entire this agreement was.[2] He, too, had that wondrous insight of genius into the essence of another's genius, and depended on it unreservedly. I remember his saying, one day, "It does not seem to occur to the idiots who object to Handel's scores being filled out orchestrally that it is an argument of some weight that a man like Mozart thought it a proper thing to do! Why, Mozart's opinion of what is right to do for Handel is worth that of a hundred thousand professors of musical history!"

In like manner, he said of the various editions of Bach's *Well-tempered Clavichord*, with their

[1] The only thoroughly excellent pianoforte score of the *Messiah* in existence. But this is too faint praise, considering the quality of the others published.

[2] If any of my readers would have a realizing sense, by actual experiment, of the world-wide difference between the sort of work Franz and Dresel demanded and that asked for by the "historical" party, I would beg them to compare Dresel's pianoforte accompaniment to the favourite *Sleep* air in Handel's *Semele* with that which runs along the bottom of the pages in the edition of the German Handel Society published by Breitkopf & Härtel. If they do not then see how far the inanity of the one falls short of the wondrous grace of the other, then are they past praying for!

mutually irreconcilable readings of certain passages, that, of all the editions ever published, the one edited by Karl Czerny almost invariably contained the best version. He was at the time engaged in preparing a new issue of the work together with Franz, and had all the different versions of disputed passages at his fingers' ends. In making their selections from these different readings, both he and Franz allowed themselves to be guided by their artistic judgment alone, regardless of all external evidence touching the authenticity or spuriousness of any of them; in short, they chose only those that were best and most like Bach. And, in speaking of Czerny's edition, Dresel suggested that its excellence might not be owing to any special musical perspicacity or carefulness in research on Czerny's part, but that, as Czerny was a pupil of Beethoven, his manuscript might very likely have passed under Beethoven's eye, and "Beethoven's opinion on such a matter would necessarily be of inestimable value." In the same way, he thoroughly agreed with Franz in denying the authenticity of the *St. Luke-Passion*.

—"I know very well," said he, "that the score is undeniably in Bach's autograph,—it is his handwriting; all the experts agree on that point. But when Bach students like Mendelssohn and Franz

unhesitatingly assert, after a careful examination of the work, that it is morally impossible that Bach ever *composed* it, that it swarms with whoppers (*Schnitzer*), such as we find in no other work by Bach written at any period in his life, you may be sure their opinion is the right one. The fact that it is in Bach's own hand goes for nothing; he may have copied it, as he copied off many another thing. To pit such evidence as that and the mere knowledge that Bach did write a *St. Luke-Passion* of some sort against the testimony of men like Mendelssohn and Franz is sheer insanity."

I do not know whether Franz was ever accused of inconsistency, as Dresel certainly was often enough; that both of them should have been accused of "narrowness" was not unnatural,—not unnatural, but intrinsically false. But men of very determined principles have been called narrow before. It may be that Dresel showed the scope of his musical appreciation more fully to those who knew him well than to people in general; he was by no means what one would call a guarded man in his conversation, and would often flare out with the most violent opinions on very slight provocation; but he was exceedingly careful about the influence he might exert upon others, and would think twice before expressing likings or dislikings—especially the former—where

there was a chance of his being misunderstood. For several years after his first coming to Boston he was set on a sort of artistic tripod in certain circles, and made the object of no little hero-worship; his word was law. He was never in the least thrown off his balance by adulation, but he did take what was really serious in his position very seriously. He felt that he could exert a salutary musical influence upon his surroundings, and took great pains to do or say nothing that might interfere with the particular influence he wished to exert. He thus often gave a somewhat false impression as to what his feelings regarding certain composers really were; considering it needless to dwell on the better side of men whose popularity was firmly established, and whose influence upon the public in general he thought none of the best. I remember that, at the time when he used to play the pianoforte a good deal, both in public and at friends' houses, he was fond of playing one little piece, the name of the composer of which he kept a profound secret. No one could ever find out from him who wrote that piece. Years afterwards, when I reminded him, one day, of his whim for making a secret of the composer, and hinted that he might have written the little trifle himself, he laughingly answered:

—"Oh, no, it was no false modesty; I did n't

write it. The thing is really charming; it was one of those happy accidents that sometimes happen to a thoroughly fourth-rate man. The man who wrote it was not in the least worthy of it. There was no need of letting people know his name and unsettling their ideas about him, which were in the main quite correct."

It was a counterpart of Rossini's "*E troppo buono per questo c*——" when he stole some other composer's aria and put it into one of his own operas. During the earlier part of Dresel's life in Boston, Italian opera, with Grisi, Mario, and others of the now vanished gods, was all the rage, and he deemed its influence upon the musical public rather debilitating. He accordingly did not give its devotees any encouragement, which led most people to imagine that he thoroughly abominated the whole business, and would have been glad to exterminate it, root and branch. But that was far enough from being his real feeling. In later years, he admitted to me that he had often played Bellini's "*Casta diva*," arranged by himself as a pianoforte nocturne.

—"Not in public," said he, "nor to any one in private,—that sort of thing needed no 'booming' from me at the time,—but to myself, as a study in phrasing. The melody is divinely beautiful. You can see that Bellini did not have to rack his brains

to find his second phrase, but that it grew right out of the first by the Heaven-sent impulse. Then that change to D minor is exquisite, a real stroke of genius!"

Another time he was glancing through the *Ingemisco* in Verdi's *Requiem* with me. His brow grew darker and darker, and at last, pointing with his finger to a certain passage, he cried out in utter disgust:

—"There! look at that! That is what we used to call, in Germany, regularly dirty (*schmutzig*) writing; it blackens the page without saying anything. The man wrote those middle-parts, not because he wanted to, but because he could not think of any other way of getting out of the scrape. But look here!" turning back to the beginning of the *Requiem*. "Where in heaven did Verdi find that C-sharp minor chord on '*et lux*'? That is one of the most impressive effects I know of anywhere! Aha! the old boy knew what he was about that time. He meant that, every note of it."

One Sunday afternoon I went up to him in the picture gallery of the St. Botolph Club, just after the first movement of Grieg's string quartet had been played, and asked him, jokingly, what he thought of that for a piece of modern writing. He made no answer, but looked unutterable things.

"Never mind," said I, still in fun, "wait till you hear the Romanza; that is something different."

I took a seat beside him, and the quartet of players began the Romanza. Much to my surprise, he whispered, after the first three or four phrases:—

—"H'm! yes; that shows talent, that shows real invention. I do not like it; I very much dislike it; but it does show genuine talent; the man has something to say."

—"It is graceful, at all events," I answered.

—"Graceful? No, I do not call that graceful; it is too strained. It has a certain seductiveness, if you will; but God help the man who needs wax in his ears for such a siren!"

The whole Wagnerian movement was naturally profoundly antipathetic to him, although he perfectly appreciated that there was that in it, and more especially in Wagner himself, which made pooh-poohing out of place. But Wagner's musical individuality was as distasteful to him as his style. Yet one morning, shortly after his return from a rather long stay in Europe, I met him at the Tremont Street corner of the Common, and, after the first greetings were over, said to him:—

—"So I hear you 've been to Bayreuth and heard *Parsifal?*"

—"Yes, I have heard *Parsifal.* I did not want

to go, but they insisted so that I should be a fool not to that I gave in and went." Then, going on very seriously, almost reverently, "It was one of the most tremendous experiences of my life! There is an unity in the whole thing; it is enormously impressive; and it is all noble (*edel*) and on a very high intellectual and poetic plane. I am not speaking of the music, but of the whole impression. As for the music, you do not think about it at the time; you hear it, as Wagner says, 'consciously unconsciously,'—ah, Wagner was talking no nonsense when he invented that phrase, '*bewusstvoll unbewusst*,'—and it only adds to the general impressiveness. To be sure, after you get home and to bed, you become conscious of having heard a great many very disagreeable things, which you try hard to forget. In the whole three acts I found only one really beautiful musical idea, that first phrase of the flower-girls,—'*Komm! komm! holder Knabe!*' That is one of those phrases that take hold of you to the marrow of your bones,—one of those phrases, such as only Wagner could write. But it comes to nothing, it is not worked out; what follows it is absolutely weak."

His experience with *Parsifal* did not breed any such enthusiasm in Dresel as inspired Franz, in 1852, to dedicate a book of songs "to the Composer of *Lohengrin*;" in reality it did nothing to

change his estimate of Wagner as a composer. After 1852, the year in which *Lohengrin* was first brought out in Weimar by Liszt, it did not take Franz long to get over his Wagner enthusiasm; and to their dying day both he and Dresel were strong anti-Wagnerites. It is somewhat curious, however, that, of all anti-Wagnerians who have been at performances of the Bayreuth master's music-dramas, Franz and Dresel should have been the ones who listened to them most in the way that Wagner himself wished them to be listened to,—giving themselves up unreservedly to the first total impression without listening critically to the music as such.

Dresel's "purism" was as thoroughgoing as possible, the more so that it was well past the self-conscious stage,—if indeed it had ever been through it,—and was functionally part and parcel of his whole artistic nature. His demands on nobility of expression in music were to the full as exacting as those he made on purity of form. I have already quoted his "God help the man who needs wax in his ears for such a siren!" in relation to the Romanza in Grieg's quartet; in a similar spirit, I once heard him say of Grieg's favourite song, "*Ich liebe dich!*" that the expression was too overdone and ignoble, and that "a man who loved so would crack ribs!"

There was not the faintest tinge of the pedant in him; there was no merely "academic" side to this artistic bent. His æsthetic principles were so purely the outcome of his own nature that they lay in his consciousness in the condition of spontaneous instincts,—instincts which it might be worth his while logically to account for, it is true, but still retaining all their vitality and immediateness. For the letter of the law he cared less than nothing; the spirit was all in all to him. One day he showed me a volume of Chopin's nocturnes on the margin of a page of which was pasted a little slip of music-paper with a measure of music in writing.

—"Look at the leading of those middle-parts," said he. "I once heard Saint-Saëns play that measure so, and got him to write it out for me; since then I have often played it so, too. It was a happy inspiration of Saint-Saëns's: it is Chopin through and through, Chopin all over; Chopin himself would have accepted it, if he had heard it!"

I suggested that that sort of thing might be a dangerous precedent; to which he replied:

—"I am not going to make a precedent of it, nor let anybody else make one, either. I have showed it only to you, and you do not play the pianoforte to people. Then, if any one should

happen to catch me at it, and complain of my taking liberties with Chopin, I could answer back that at least I have never been guilty of playing that misprint D-sharp *acciaccatura* in the second measure of the Romanza in the E minor concerto, that is in all but the very latest editions, and has been played by pianist after pianist all over the world. I never made Chopin write such abominable harmony as that D-sharp in the right hand makes against the D-sharp in the bass. The thing ought plainly enough to be a B-natural, and nobody but a duffer could have taken it for anything else."

For a man of his naturally strong feelings and uncompromising views, he was remarkably free from prejudice. For instance, although he would never admit that Berlioz was a great, nor even a good, harmonist, in spite of all his subtlety, he one day pointed out to me a passage in Weber's *Invitation à la Valse* in which he showed that Weber had written a very bad bass, and then showed me how Berlioz "had perceived, and very properly corrected, the error" in his orchestral transcription of the piece. Most men with Dresel's dislike for Berlioz and admiration for Weber would have cried out against the former's "vandalism." With all his cool regard for the fashionable Italian opera composers,—I have already mentioned his practi-

sing "*Casta diva*" as a pianoforte nocturne,—he would go into raptures over certain things of Rossini's; he had a special admiration for the overture to *Guillaume Tell* and the first act of the *Barbiere*. I remember his saying one day, about the opening "*Piano, pianissimo!*" scene, that it showed genius of the first water; "Mozart himself could not have written it better. Then the orchestration, that bassoon doubling the first violins in the octave, with its suggestion of darkness, is simply masterly."

During the earlier years of his life in Boston, it was only his intimate friends who associated him especially with Bach and Handel; to the musical public he stood much more as the champion of Chopin and Schumann, and of Robert Franz's songs. In those days, when he was still prominently before the public as a pianist, he used to play Chopin a great deal; he was also extremely fond of playing Liszt's transcriptions of Franz and Schubert songs, and that of Weber's *Schlummerlied*. In fact, he was generally accepted as a champion of the then "modern-romantic" school, but still with strong leanings toward the classics. He was rather chary about playing Bach or Handel in public, since the cultivation of a popular taste and appreciation for these masters was the object nearest his heart, and he saw how important it was not

to excite any antipathy to them in the beginning; he knew he had a hard task before him, and was very circumspect about what experiments he made.

If the charge of "narrowness" so often brought against Dresel was really unfounded, this was not quite the case with the charge of "inconsistency." In truth, he often *seemed* the most inconsistent man imaginable. But, in the last analysis, this inconsistency of his was more apparent than real. He would say one thing one day, and another diametrically opposite the next, and generally with a violence and frankness that left nothing to be desired. In his playing, and later in his conducting, he would take the same thing at a very different tempo on different occasions. He was no believer in the modern school of "emotional performance" and "rhythmic freedom;" he said repeatedly that a certain stability and unity of tempo was an essential part of that unity of form which all true music should have. But, as Franz said of him, he was an extremely "subjective" man, of very strong feelings and high-strung nerves, and could not help following the impulse of the moment. Although a man of wide intellectual scope, thoroughly logical in his cast of mind, and able to look at things from various points of view, as a rule he took only one point of view at a time, and for the moment that was the only one that existed

for him. It was this, more than anything else, that gave him the appearance of inconsistency; and it took a long and intimate acquaintance with him to appreciate that this inconsistency with himself was only superficial, after all. For there was really a fine harmony underlying all he said and did; his seemingly irreconcilable and contradictory utterances were but momentary expressions of different sides of one and the same firmly convinced and unswervingly true individuality. He was a far more spherically developed nature than all but a few of his friends gave him credit for being, and saw clearly enough that the whole truth was never on any one side; but in his conversation he almost always gave voice to the truth that lay uppermost in his mind at the time. Sometimes he would make his friends stare. I shall never forget the impression made by one of his outbreaks at a meeting of the program committee of the Harvard Musical Association at the time of the old symphony concerts. There had been a good deal of discussion about putting I now forget what composition on the program, when Dresel suddenly sprang up and said:

—"Mr. President and Gentlemen: Let me remind you of the fact that, in making up these programs, we should not consult only our own personal taste in the matter. If I consulted only

my own pleasure, I should have no Beethoven, no Bach, no Mozart, no Schubert, no Schumann, no Handel, no Haydn, no Mendelssohn, nor Weber, nor Cherubini; but only Wagner and Berlioz and Raff and Liszt and Goldmark and Rubinstein and all the rest of them. But that would be a questionable education for our audiences, and we really must consider that."

Almost everyone present thought he was joking, and his speech was greeted with a hearty laugh; but I heard him mutter, half to himself and half to me, as he turned away:

"That rubbishy idea of taking *pleasure* in hearing the same old things played year after year in the same old way! I can imagine no more infernal bore—except listening to the *whole* of a Bach suite at a sitting."

He was really in earnest, or a good deal more than half in earnest; only those who heard him failed to detect what the real main-spring of his speech was. It is perfectly true that he did take pleasure in hearing new music, in knowing what was going on in the musical world, and getting new emotions. He was fond of hearing things that "had a go to them;" and I remember his frantically applauding a performance of Liszt's second rhapsody (the "young ladies' seminary" rhapsody) by Thomas's orchestra,—muttering the

while, "Do you think I had not rather hear that than the fifth symphony all washed out with sentimentality?" To be sure, the performance of the fifth symphony that evening had been rather lackadaisical.

But his enjoyment of the new music was *à fleur de peau*, a sort of superficial tickling; he had no sympathy with it nor its ideals. He strongly deplored anything like artistic omnivorousness in any one. He used to speak of Liszt as "absolutely a musical ostrich," who could digest anything. He spoke of Ferdinand Hiller's "having not entirely secret yearnings for the Italian siren," for which "Mendelssohn scolded him roundly, often enough." "Where things are irreconcilable, you must take one side or the other," he would say, "or else you lose all artistic spinal column, and become a mollusk." In speaking of the modern schools, he once said: "I find no lack of talent in these new lights, sometimes I even find hints at genius; but what seems to be utterly dead and gone is all real mastery. Of course I object to the things they do, but I should not object half so strongly, and sometimes I should not object at all, if they only did them better. Look here!" darting across the room, and taking up a volume of Bach's organ preludes (*Choralvorspiele*). "Look at this closing cadence, with its audacious transi-

tion through a distant key. Mr. Gounod and Mr. Bizet could not do finer than that! But old Bach did it *well;* there is some hang-together and reason in it; and it is divinely beautiful. The old boy knew it, too, perfectly well; for see, he has written '*adagiosissimo*' over it!"

After all, it was in talking about the great classic masters that Dresel showed himself thoroughly at his best; then his enthusiasm knew no bounds, and he would ransack three languages for glowing terms and striking similes. Yet, in the hottest blaze of his enthusiasm over these congenial themes, he would never for a moment lose his balance; even in argument and discussion he kept his head and heels to perfection. One day, when he was pointing out to me some particular beauty in the seventh symphony, I mentioned having just heard a certain lecturer call Beethoven "*the* greatest composer of all time."

—"Now, what foolish talk that is!" cried Dresel, "*the* greatest composer! He was the greatest in the symphony, in the sonata, and in the string quartet; but in Music's house there are many mansions. Bach and Handel did far greater work than he in oratorio and church music; where is he on the organ, compared with Bach? And with all his great pianoforte sonatas, he never wrote the *Well-tempered Clavichord,* which is a work of a

certain importance in its way. Then Mozart was a greater opera-writer than he, and surely Schubert pretty well knocked him out in song-writing. *The* greatest composer! Will you please tell me who *is* THE greatest composer?"

Upon the whole, it was in speaking of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert that the sureness of his mental and emotional balance showed itself most unmistakably, and that his expression of opinion was least swayed by the mood of the moment. Not that his expression was less downright and violent, but that one found less apparent inconsistency in it. He ill brooked contradiction, especially on the subject nearest his heart, and anything touching the honour of his favourite composers would call forth the frankest and bluntest remarks from him. A certain musician once showed him arrangements for two pianofortes of Bach's concertos for three clavichords and strings that he had just added to his library, asking him if he knew these arrangements. "Yes," answered Dresel; "they are the most outrageous pieces of butchery ever committed."

His criticisms on musical doings in other fields, particularly on musical performances, were seldom so downright; but his caustic sarcasm would be none the less biting. Coming out one afternoon from a pianoforte recital given by a certain young

woman, I asked him what he thought of the pianist's future prospects.

—"Ah, the beautiful young creature!" said he. "Her prospects, who knows? She plays with so much feeling . . . such very wrong notes . . . and holds them so lovingly! . . . Whew!"

Another time I was looking over the score of a new symphony with him at a rehearsal. At a certain strenuous passage he began under his breath:

—"*Miaou! miaou!* we shall have to get another *mise en scène* for the concert; we ought to have a roof, with a ridgepole and some chimneys."

Later in the same symphony the repeated recurrence of a certain horn-phrase elicited from him:

—"It seems to me as if Mr. ——," naming the composer, "must find that very beautiful!"

Yet it was owing to an impetuous temper and an almost too ardent faith in his convictions that he sometimes gave offence, rather than to any innate want of tact. Very undiplomatic and wholly transparent he certainly was, and the truth—or what he saw as truth—took so fierce a hold upon him that he often seemed to see nothing else. His mind worked unswervingly toward one point, and in expressing himself earnestly, at times even violently, he forgot personal considerations; but no one could be more surprised and grieved than he

when he found he had hurt any one's feelings, or had been thought to bear personal ill will. On the other hand, his tact in musical matters was often wonderful: the way in which he, when conducting rehearsals, coaxed his chorus to conquer difficulties and managed every singer who came under his influence was simply perfect. Singers felt they were doing their very best with him; he never let them for a moment feel overtired, dissatisfied, or discouraged, and was as careful that everything they sang should be effective for them and those who heard them as he was that it should be good. To bore people, to be socially or musically tedious, was for him an idea full of horror; he would really suffer at having what he thought a tiresomely put-together program ascribed to him as his work.

Dresel was a firm believer in the conscious power of genius, and scouted the idea that the process of artistic creation goes on without the creator's understanding it. He would often say that the really great things were always written, not by any happy accident, but distinctly on purpose, and with a perfect knowledge on the writer's part of how and why they were great. He emphatically denied that a truly great genius was at the mercy of his inspiration; affirming, on the contrary, that a man was master of his inspiration in direct pro-

portion with the greatness of his genius. "It is the little men who now and then do fine things by accident, and without knowing how they do them; the true masters always know what they are about."

As a pianist, Dresel was one of the most inspiring players I ever listened to. He was seldom at his best in public, being essentially what Berlioz called "an artist of the drawing-room." His extreme nervousness, his insatiate self-criticism, his exalted idea of an artist's responsibility, all militated against his being in good form on public occasions for which he had gone through a long course of preparation. On such occasions he was too frequently what athletes call "stale,"—overtrained, with his nervous irritability in excess over his self-command. In this respect he was very like Adolf Henselt, who gave up playing in public early in his long artistic career. Dresel's best playing was done in private, when asked to play on the spur of the moment—better still when he offered to play of his own accord. Then his playing would reach the very acme of inspiring beauty and vital force. For true genius at white heat, yet controlled by the finest artistic sense of measure, I have never heard his best playing surpassed by any of the greatest pianists. Rubinstein himself could not outbid the afflatus with which Dresel would

play at times. He had an incisiveness and brilliancy of tone, a vigour of accent, that carried everything before them. If his playing lacked any fine quality, it was perhaps that of *suavity;* as somebody once said of him, he played as if the keys were red-hot. Like Gottschalk, he had the peculiar power of producing a brilliant, ringing quality of tone even in the softest *pianissimo.* But his career as a concert pianist belongs to the first half of his life.

Dresel's musical influence upon those who came in contact with him was of the finest. To be sure, the circle of those who came under it was more and more restricted as he grew older. Perhaps he himself unconsciously contracted it. He had lived to see Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Chopin well installed in their normal position in the estimation of the Boston public; Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven had always been held in honour; and the only field for musical propagandism left him was to encourage the cult of Bach and Handel. To preach Bach and Handel in Boston—or anywhere else, for matter of that—was to preach to few listeners. Handel, to be sure, had long been popular; at least the *Messiah, Samson, Israel in Egypt,* and some few of his other oratorios had been; but Dresel's ideas of doing full justice to the works of the great master differed widely from

the current traditional ones, and his attempts to propagate them were, oftener than not, resented by people who thought years of routine had taught them all they needed to know about Handel, and the general public were loath to welcome any influence that should disturb them in their old habits. With Bach, again, Dresel's work of propagandism was more difficult still; there was no popular interest in Bach of any sort, and what people did hear of him did not particularly attract them. In fact, music-lovers in general felt more and more like letting Dresel have his Bach and Handel to himself, and not bothering their own heads about the two old masters. Dresel became more and more exclusively associated with them in people's minds, as a man who cared for little or nothing else in music, and was consequently more and more looked upon as one whose mental bias made him out of touch with the present musical world at large. His well-known opposition not only to Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner, but to Raff, Rubinstein, Goldmark, Brahms, and others of the newer schools, only increased the distrust with which most people regarded his opinions. In a word, he preached more and more in the desert, and fewer and fewer music-lovers were inclined to listen to him.

It was during only the last few years of his life

that a happy circumstance enabled him once more to exert directly the influence he had always been most anxious to exert,—upon a small circle, it is true, but where it could bring forth some good fruit, and not be wholly wasted. This was the formation of the Bach Club: a choir of picked singers, many of them professional, who met at his house every Monday evening during the winter to practise choruses by Bach and Handel under his direction, accompanied by himself on the pianoforte, with a firmer background of tone supplied by a small pipe-organ he had had built in his music-room, which was played on these occasions by competent organists. Sometimes whole cantatas would be rehearsed, recitatives, arias, and all,—for some of the best singers in the city were members of the club. Twice or three times in the winter some twenty or thirty musical friends would be invited to hear a "performance;" and the musical influence of the club thus extended to a larger circle. Although the scheme did not include any sort of orchestra, the conditions for musical effect were peculiarly and exceptionally fine: that small and carefully drilled chorus, singing in a room where the volume and vitality of tone suffered nothing from evaporation, the generally fine quality of the individual voices,—on this point Dresel was exceedingly fastidious,—and the contagious,

masterly vigour with which the pianoforte accompaniments were played, together with the firm bass of the organ pedals, all united to make these performances, especially of the things by Bach, overwhelmingly impressive. All who had the good luck to be present at these gala evenings of the Bach Club could count them among the high tides of their musical experience. The best part of the influence was upon the singers themselves. Few of them joined the club with great expectations of enjoyment, and many were induced to come at first more because they were invited than for any other reason. But the overmastering charm of Dresel's personality, his communicative enthusiasm, and the new insight he gave them into the unaccustomed music held them fast. I have never spoken with a member of the club, no matter how slight his previous interest in Bach may have been, who did not count these evenings at Dresel's house as the most valuable and inspiring fact in his artistic education. The influence was doubtless upon a small circle; but it was of the very best imaginable, and an intelligent nucleus is always worth cultivating. Here were at least twenty-four or thirty singers who had been led on to find Bach and Handel not merely interesting and instructive, but a genuine source of musical enthusiasm and excitement. That was surely worth while. And

it may well be doubted whether any very fruitful influence, of just the right sort, could have been exerted in favour of a Bach or Handel propaganda in any other way. Those great masters, notably Bach, were essentially musical aristocrats; they may be taken as supreme examples of what Franz wrote in one of his letters to me:

"Art, as the noblest blossom of every age, is in its very nature aristocratic through and through, and must therefore not deport itself democratically in those of its achievements that aim at being monumental."

A Bach and Handel propaganda, especially nowadays, can hope to be truly and rightly efficient only in small circles; happy the propagandist of this high cult if he can get a few willing listeners to heed him and try to understand his teaching! In this way a nucleus of intelligent enthusiasm may be formed, and that nucleus may perhaps grow with time. Other hope of initiating the world into the higher and more sacred mysteries of Bach's and Handel's art there seems at present to be none.

Here we have, to my mind, the most valuable part of the life-work of both Franz and Dresel,—the work they did toward promoting a right understanding of the genius and works of Bach and Handel; sweeping away, as far as they were able, the

accumulated rubbish of ever deteriorating tradition and routine stupidity under which the art legacy of these two supreme masters had lain half hidden for generations, and bringing its true worth and significance to the light of day. Their best work was to "exclude trash, and let what was genuine come into its rights." And of all men of their day, they were the best fitted for the task.

JOHN SULLIVAN DWIGHT

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THE remarkable man who has just passed away was one of the most unique figures Boston has ever claimed as her own. Men of naturally fine and sensitive artistic nature, yet without productive promptings, are not very uncommon; neither is it very seldom that we find a man of this sort who has been content to develop his æsthetic bent in a wholly general way, without giving much heed to the minutiæ of special, quasi-technical cultivation in any particular direction. But it is exceedingly seldom that one finds such a man pass a long life in intimate, almost daily, communion with literature and the fine arts, and preserve intact all the native spontaneity and naïveté of his feelings, so that he remains quite free from any taint of self-conscious dilettantism, and wholly uninfluenced by merely artificial standards.

What most made Dwight remarkable was his inveterate instinct for culture—as distinguished from mere learning. Perhaps it may have been in a large measure a certain unconquerable mental

indolence that prompted him always to take the royal road in everything, to skip lightly over the dry rudiments of every study,—or what to men otherwise disposed would have been study,—and absorb immediately what he could of its final essence. Mentally indolent he certainly was to a high degree; he abominated work; the necessity for work seemed to him, upon the whole, a sad mistake in the scheme of the universe. And, though he did a good deal of it, first and last, in the course of his life, it was never otherwise than irksome to him; he worked, as it were, under protest. Yet, making all due allowance for this mental indolence of his, one must recognize also that his inveterate longing for complete intellectual digestion and assimilation led him, as by an inborn instinct, to bring his mind to bear only upon what was really digestible and assimilable by it. He felt that mere knowledge, or half-knowledge, was of no genuine use to a man, that only that knowledge which has become so thoroughly part and parcel of the man's own self as to be convertible into feeling and instinct is really valuable. So he threw open his mental receptivity only in the directions whence intellectual or artistic experiences would come of themselves to meet it, and leave their indelible trace on the retina of his mind of their own accord and without effort on his part.

What he got in this way he did completely and thoroughly digest; it was absorbed into his very being and became a functional part of himself.

None but the most absolutely genuine, true, and indestructible artistic nature could have gone through life on such a plan without inevitable ruin; but Dwight got no harm from it, the pure gold of his æsthetic sense was only more and more refined by the ordeal. His naïveté of perception, his ever youthful enthusiasm, his ineradicable power of enjoyment, held out unimpaired to the end. What he was, he was genuinely and thoroughly; fashion had no hold on him, and his refinement never had a touch of dandyism nor finical affectation.

Dwight's artistic gift was of a very general sort. His choice of Music from among the fine arts as his daily companion through life was undoubtedly less owing to any special aptitude than to the extraordinary vividness and intensity with which musical impressions affect almost all artistic natures. Music was the art which could be enjoyed most intensely, immediately, and with the least effort; so he took to Music. What Carlyle called that "kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the infinite, and lets us for moments gaze into that," was just the art of all others to appeal most irresistibly to a

dreamy, sybaritic, intellectually luxurious nature like Dwight's. His life-long communion with it was, as it were, predestined.

Of specifically musical organization he had extremely little; his only native aptitude for the art consisted in what is commonly called "a fair ear" and general æsthetic sensibility. It may be doubted whether he ever really studied music; his technical knowledge of the art was always slight. He could read notes and work his way through pianoforte scores on that instrument, although he never even began (or tried to begin) to master its technique. When in college he played the clarinet a little in the Pierian Sodality; he had a certain, rather superficial knowledge of the rudiments of harmony, and a somewhat more exact and extended acquaintance with the rules of musical form. His knowledge of musical terminology, however, was comprehensive and accurate,—astonishingly so in one whose technical knowledge of the art was so incomplete. He never developed anything that could fairly be called musical facility; he never handled musical notation with the ease of a craftsman, and always found some difficulty in following performances from the score, especially when things went at a rapid tempo. His naturally musical ear never developed to more than an average pitch of delicacy; technical slips seldom dis-

turbed him, and "rough performances" fully satisfied him, if only the right spirit was there.

Yet, with and in spite of all this, his musical instincts and perceptions were, in a certain high respect, of the finest. He was irresistibly drawn toward what is pure, noble, and beautiful, and felt these things with infinite keenness; he had an inborn and unconquerable horror of the merely grandiose, of what is big without being great, of the factitiously intense, of the trivial and vulgar. He was an optimist, through and through, and wished all art to be as optimistic as himself; what was morbid had little attraction for him, and the divinities he most worshipped were the "healthy, eupeptic" composers: Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Gluck, Beethoven, Schubert, Weber, and Mendelssohn. Of the more morbidly sensitive and analytically introspective composers he could sympathize only with those in whom he found morbid sensibility constantly cured and atoned for by immaculate beauty and perfect clarity of expression, such as Schumann and Chopin. His utter distaste for music of the more modern schools, for Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, and even Raff and Brahms, has too often been ascribed to sheer prejudice. No doubt prejudice did play some part in the matter: these modern men came upon Dwight somewhat late in life, when, although he retained all his

naïveté and enthusiasm, his musical receptivity had become to a certain extent anchylosed into immobility, and he found it difficult to throw off old habits and adopt new points of view. But there was nevertheless a deeper and more solid ground for his abhorrence of these composers: the whole essentially modern spirit which pervades their work, with all its high-strung nervous energy, restless striving, and lack of serenity and repose, the way their music reflects the characteristic strenuousness and turmoil of modern life, were totally antipathetic to his nature. He was essentially a Hellene and an idealist; any too drastic and realistic presentation of the morbid side of life shocked his finer sensibilities and seemed to him unworthy of the sacredness of Art.

Upon the whole, Dwight was a man considerably astray in this nineteenth century of ours, with its hurry, bustle, and fierce struggle for existence; if he could sympathize with and honour its aims, he thoroughly detested its methods, and could never be brought to see that these methods were the necessary outgrowth of its aims. Beauty and ideality were to him the only important realities; what was merely practical and, as the common phrase goes, "useful" seemed to him superfluous and impertinent. It is related of him that, when

the building in which he lived at Brook Farm took fire and was burned to the ground, he straightway ran up to the top of a neighbouring hillock and was lost in ecstasy at the beauty of the flames against the dark sky. The anecdote is sharply characteristic! Of what is called nowadays "enterprise" he had no conception; for mere Athenian curiosity, the common greed for accumulating indigestible facts, he had the supremest contempt. Probably the compliment paid his paper, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, that most pleased him was when Richard Grant White once wrote him that it was "not a *newsy* paper—a vile phrase for a viler thing!" He was never in a hurry, and never could understand why any one should be.

For such a man to edit a paper of any sort certainly has its whimsical side. Yet, if we look more closely into the matter we shall see that it was just because Dwight was what he was that *Dwight's Journal of Music* was so admirable a paper. It certainly was the highest-toned musical periodical of its day, all the world over. In it Dwight's fineness of artistic instinct and his unflinching intellectual honesty found adequate expression. He has often been praised for the courage he showed in standing to his guns as he did, through thick and thin. Indeed, his moral courage was something wonderful, and all the more so

for being wholly unconscious; for it never occurred to him that it took any "courage" to say just what he thought, utterly regardless of consequences. Then he was a born critic in the highest sense; not a man whose exact technical knowledge of his subject enables him to discourse learnedly and irrefragably on it; not one whose comparison of a work of art with acknowledged standards would be academically instructive; but a man of the keenest perceptions of beauty and grandeur, who could make you see the beauty he saw, and make you feel with him the grandeur he felt. In all criticism there is perhaps nothing superior to his wonderful, thrice wonderful, analysis of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* which appeared in one of the early issues of his *Journal of Music*. Well might Theodore Parker (who, by the way, was thoroughly unmusical) exclaim after reading it: "To think of a man's being able to make all that out of an opera!" It is more than an analytical criticism; it is a work of art!

Indeed, Dwight's specific literary faculty was as fine as that of any born American who ever wrote; his style was at once brilliant, solid, and impeccable; better prose than his it were hard to find anywhere; for facility and neatness, for elegance, and unforced grace, it approached that of the best French masters. His gift for writing verse, too,

was conspicuous; and, although he had neither creative genius nor promptings, he made some of the best translations of well-nigh untranslatable German poetry in existence. No one else has succeeded so well as he, when at his best, in preserving the aroma of some of Heine's lyrics in an English version; though probably his greatest feat in this line was his translation of Luther's "*Ein' feste Burg,*" in which he dared to retain all the rugged, masculine strength of the original. He always had the strength of his convictions, and this showed itself quite as plainly in his literary and poetic style as in his expression of opinion. He had the faculty of finding the right word, and daring to use it, whatever it might be. How his

> "An' were this world of devils full,
> All hungry to devour us;
> Yet, fearing naught, *we 'll stand the pull,*
> They shall not overpow'r us!"

makes all other current versions seem like rose-water! Here you feel there is a man's hand at the bellows! You hear the very Luther himself speak!

Personally Dwight was the most genial of companions. His inveterate optimism, his sunny nature, and unspoilable power of enjoyment were contagious. Few men probably ever enjoyed life

as he did ; to him life was all roses, with never a thorn,—save perhaps in the (to him) minor matter of Wagner, Liszt & Co. Whether it was a fine day, a fair landscape, a poem, a Beethoven symphony, or a lobster salad with a bottle of champagne, his enjoyment of it was something wonderful to contemplate ; and external conditions had but little influence upon his delight in the good things of this life—intellectual, spiritual, or fleshly. Even in times and circumstances that would have driven other men to the brink of despair, he had an alchemy that contrived to extract some pleasure from the most unpromising slag. How that benign, intellectual, sunlit face of his will be missed from the seat in the first balcony of the Music Hall, of which he was the almost never-failing occupant for twenty-five years or more ! It is fitting that the Music Hall he loved should go with him. May both rest in peace !

SOME THOUGHTS ON MUSICAI CRITICISM

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It has long been a matter of debate what the true function of the critic is. The old school of criticism was evidently troubled by no doubts on this head; the critic was, in the fullest sense of the term, a judge, one who sat in judgment, and whose decrees, delivered *ex cathedra*, aimed at a certain finality. The most exhaustive knowledge and rigid impartiality were necessarily presupposed; the critic, thus armed, sought to determine with categorial precision what was good and what bad.

This school of criticism has, even to-day, many advocates. It is not long since I read somewhere that there are two kinds of critics: the critic who writes what he thinks he knows, and the one who writes what he knows he knows, and that only the latter should have any real authority. Authority—perhaps! but it is a question in my mind whether a critic should properly have any *authority* at all. Dogmatic and authoritative criticism would be all very well, if the critic were possessed of one thing

—OMNISCIENCE! For, without this, his field is singularly circumscribed, or else his position an exceedingly ticklish one. Just how much can a musical critic claim to "know he knows" about a composition or performance? In my opinion, very little indeed. He may know whether the music is correctly written, or not, according to traditional rules; whether the performance is in time and tune, or not; whether the singer pronounces the words of the text distinctly, or unintelligibly. Such hard-pan facts he can fairly claim to *know*. But all that lies outside and beyond such facts is a matter of opinion; and opinion, though never so well founded, is not certainty. And, if the chief aim of musical criticism is to raise the standard of musical performance and popular musical appreciation,—as I firmly believe it to be,—a mere detailing of absolutely knowable facts is of little use. That is reporter's work, not criticism in any high sense of the word.

To my mind, criticism should be nothing but an expression of enlightened opinion,—as enlightened as possible, but never dogmatic. What the critic *knows* is valuable to himself mainly; it is what he *thinks* and *feels* that is valuable to others. And it is extremely important that the public, who read criticism, should know with whom they have to deal. This is one reason why I so much like the

French style of, so-called, personal criticism; where the critic writes over his own signature, gives his own opinions for what they are worth, and fights for his own ideas. Very likely he may be biassed, one-sided, a partisan of some particular school, purblind to merits of a certain sort, and over-prone to admire virtues of another description. But no matter for that, his readers will find him out soon enough, and know what allowances to make. And, with this tacit understanding, the critic can feel himself free; he can extol the merits that seem to him conspicuous and praiseworthy, blame the faults that set his teeth on edge; in a word, state his own side of the case with that vigour of enthusiasm without which all writing lacks savour and vitality. He stands admittedly as a representative of nothing but his own ideas; and he is enabled to place these in the strongest light. What he writes will be truly alive and suggestive; it will set people thinking; and this is perhaps the very best thing any criticism can do. What of it, if he see only one side of a question? He is not the only critic in the world, and may be sure there will be plenty of others to take up the other side. He may leave that part of the business to them with perfect safety; for they will do it far better than he. I insist upon it that, in a matter where thought and feeling are so intimately com-

bined as in our relations to the art of music, nothing is really worth writing that is not strongly felt by the writer; and, although he may be able to reason on both sides of a question, his feelings and sympathies will pretty surely be only on one side.

I would by no means be understood to imply that "personal" criticism, the expression of personal opinion, should be in any way a careless or thoughtless business. Criticism should be something far more serious and profound than the recording of mere momentary impressions. The only true point of departure for musical criticism is an accurate perception of the music or performance to be criticised; and such a perception can in no important case be arrived at carelessly. The critic's first aim should be to show the thing as he sees it, and, the farther he sees into it, the better. If he see no farther than his readers do, he will be read only as long as they agree with him; but, if he does see farther, and makes it plain that he does, he will be read at any rate.

It has often been said that it is one of the musical critic's duties to encourage young talent; if this means anything, it means that he should help to make the path to fame and fortune easy for new composers and performers. It seems to me, however, that this idea has been somewhat unduly

emphasized. I can not see that, in so far as regards encouragement, the critic has any duty beyond encouraging what he deems worthy. Nay, more than this, I think young talent in general is something against which it behooves the critic to be somewhat on his guard. This may sound hard-hearted, but I thoroughly believe it. A young composer may say :

—"I feel I have talent, and my friends agree with me ; I have devoted years to the hardest and sincerest study, all my best energies have been given to my art ; my aim has been steadily high. I have had to fight my own way, to scrape together, dollar by dollar, the money my musical education has cost me, and have endured many privations ; it seems to me, then, that all this earnest and single-hearted endeavour entitles me to . . ."

—"My dear young friend," I reply, "it entitles you to an enviable place in the Kingdom of Heaven and the admiring respect of all who know you on earth. But it is with the exact value of the *results* of your work that I, as a critic, have to do, and with this only. If your work is good, it shall be my highest privilege to point out its excellence ; but, if it is not good, it is merely an encumbrance on the face of the earth, the world needs it not, and it must go the way of all useless things."

Success should be to the strong alone; and they, thank heaven! can win it for themselves. And it is for the strong man to prove himself strong; it is nobody else's business. I would have all critics who have encouraged the weaklings of art, "though, peradventure, *I* stand accountant for as great a sin," indicted for compounding a public nuisance. Composers, players, and singers must stand or fall by their own merits, and the weak go to the wall.

This rigid attitude of the musical critic in face of young talent, which I so strongly advocate, is a very different thing from that persecution of men of genius by critics, of which we have heard more than a little. Persecution is perhaps a rather big word for it; but let it pass. Although it is one of the duties of criticism not to stand between weak things and their natural destiny, the most foolish and futile thing criticism can do is to try to oppose the success and welfare of what has shown itself strong. No doubt the critic should be true to his convictions, and a dash of wholesome conservatism in him does no harm; for he plays the part of fly-wheel in the art-life of the world, not that of main-spring. But he should ever be on the alert to recognize genius wherever he meets it; and, if the manifestations of a new *genius* seem to him to stray from the true path of art, then is the time for him to be exceedingly circumspect. He must

remember that the progress of music, like that of the other fine arts, like that of everything in this world, is essentially an evolution, and that the path this evolution has followed has been, and ever will be, hewn out by men of creative genius, and not by critics. A new genius may so comport itself as to shock the critic's most cherished convictions as to what is true, beautiful, and eternal in music; but let him think twice before trying to stem its course. It may have that in it which can scatter all his arguments to the four winds, and make all his knowledge and cultured taste ridiculous. It may seem to him monstrous and absurd; but, if it shows strength, let him rather try to learn from it the secret of that strength, for it will be a lesson worth his learning.

It is of no use trying to resist the onward march of a Beethoven, a Schumann, a Berlioz, or a Wagner! When a composer is strong enough to subjugate a quarter of the world, let the other three-quarters look to it, for their time may come at any moment. But, if any hardly-treated young whipper-snapper of a composer cry out to stern criticism: "Hold your lash! For aught you know I may be the 'coming man,' a Beethoven or Wagner in embryo!" Hm!—possibly; but, as the world goes, the chances are against it. At all events, let the young whipper-snapper first prove himself to

be somebody, first conquer his quarter of the world; then will be the time for criticism to take him more seriously.

Upon the whole, it seems to me that the critic should not write for the benefit of the artist,—composer or performer,—but mainly, or solely, for the benefit of the public. His true position is that of interpreter between the composer, or performer, and the public, and to a certain extent also that of guardian of popular taste; but it is not for him to try to play schoolmaster to artists. Artists are, as a rule, an exceedingly obstinate and stiff-necked generation, and have but little regard for criticism, except as a commercial value. If they are earnest students, they feel—and with considerable reason, too—that they know their business quite as well as the critic; well-meant advice is pretty sure to be thrown away upon them. If, on the other hand, they are of the sort that aims at immediate "success" at all hazards, they are not worth the critic's instructive powder and shot. I think that, in general, the critic can easily learn more from artists than they are likely ever to learn from him. A pretty constant intercourse with composers, singers, and players is of incalculable value to the musical critic. But in his writing it is with the public that he has mainly, if not wholly, to do. It is for their benefit that his criticisms should be writ-

ten ; and, if he can not look at music from a higher and more comprehensive point of view than they, he is no man for his place. He must have finer and more cultivated musical perceptions than his readers, and his highest function should be to let them—as far as he and they are able—listen to music with his ears.

But, as for sitting in judgment on music, like an æsthetic Rhadamanthus, and deciding *ex cathedra* that this is good, and that bad—this seems to me about as preposterous a position as a fallible mortal can well assume ; and in this, as in most serious matters, it is hard to be preposterous without doing more harm than good.

MUSIC AND SCIENCE

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TRUE musical science is young as yet. Probably no other one of the fine arts has been subjected to so much scientific, or would-be-scientific, investigation, has been made the theme of so much philosophical speculation, as Music. Yet there is probably no other art, the history of which shows so appalling a picture of the futility of speculative theorizing. Though the history of Music reveals to us, on the one hand, a long and glorious line of examples of the creative and constructive genius of great men, it also shows us the path the art has travelled, in its gradual growth and development, as strewn from end to end with the inert fragments of exploded theories. I doubt if the history of any other fine art appears so much like a common dumping-ground for theoretical rubbish. Time and time again have philosophers and men of science done their best to set up some theoretic guide-post, to show Music what course was properest for her to pursue; and the art has, in most instances, seemed to take a diabolical delight in walking

straight over the guidepost. In hardly a single case has musical theory kept pace with musical practice; musical art has far outstripped musical science.

This is by no means to be wondered at, if we make perfectly clear to ourselves what the true nature of the Science of Music is. The Science of Music, properly speaking, is much of the same nature as the so-called natural sciences: it deals with the observation and classification of phenomena, and the discovery of the laws that govern them. It may be said that the ultimate object of all science is the discovery of law. Music is the oldest of the fine arts, though it had an exceedingly long infancy; Architecture, Poetry, Sculpture, and Painting were born later, if they matured earlier. But, long as the infancy of the Art of Music was, the Science of Music has had a longer one, and can hardly be said to be quite out of it yet.

This disproportion between the rate of growth of the art itself and the advance of the science which should reveal the laws of its growth is to be explained, not so much by the inherent difficulty and abstruseness of Music, as a field for scientific research, as by the faulty and inadequate methods by which this research has too often been conducted. Music has been made too much the theme for abstract deductive reasoning. The deductive method, which starts with general principles, and works

down from them to the explanation of particular concrete cases, is a dangerous scientific tool; the temptation it offers to distort the statement of facts, so as to make them accord with theory, is often irresistible. Yet this method is the one upon which scholastic musical science has most implicitly relied. Among the besetting vices of this method may be counted the prevailing tendency of those who employ it to introduce a deal of irrelevant matter into their discussion of problems. Some of the conclusions arrived at in the earlier days of musical research make us smile now. For instance, this: that triple time is the noblest of musical rhythms, because there are three persons in the Holy Trinity! This was believed once. But, upon the whole, the worst vice of scholastic musical science—which holds by the deductive method as it does by dear life—has been its readiness, as Dickens puts it, to conjugate itself into the imperative mood on all possible occasions. Instead of plunging straight into an exhaustive study of actual musical phenomena, and building up what best theory he could base on his observation thereof, the scholastic musical scientist was wont to climb some philosophic Sinaï, and, after a season of contemplation of the clouds, come down again, not with a well-grounded scientific hypothesis, but with a table of commandments. It is to be remarked, however,

that this sort of musical Moses was generally saved the trouble of breaking *his own* tables !

True Science has nothing whatsoever to do with the imperative mood ; it concerns itself with what is, what has been, and, on occasion, with what will be. And, if the Science of Music is to grow, as this nineteenth century of ours has seen other sciences grow, it must be by the same means. The great intellectual triumph of this century has been to perfect the methods of scientific research. The inductive method, which sets out with a close observation of actual facts, and proceeds therefrom to the building up of well-founded theories of the laws which govern such facts, is the very essence of modern Science. Let but the Science of Music trust equally to a rigid employment of this method, and it will be to the narrow dogmatism of the old scholastics what modern Chemistry is to mediæval Alchemy : a science worthy of the name.

The Art of Music is not, like Mathematics, an ideal chain of abstract conceptions ; it is the sum of all the music that has been sung, played, or written, from time immemorial down to the present day. And the Science of Music has not primarily to do with abstract conceptions, but, like the sciences of Chemistry, Geology, Astronomy, Physiology, and Biology, and quite as much as these, with actual phenomena. No doubt it is true that

one science, in a certain sense, rests on another, and is in a measure to be explained by it. In this sense it may be said that Physiology rests, in part, on Physics. I once heard Dr. Thomas Dwight lecture on the structure of bone; he showed how the internal structure of a bone was in accordance with certain physical laws governing the relations between weight and support. Thus a physiological law was explained by a physical law. But the physiological law was not *discovered* by making physical experiments; it was discovered by an extended series of observations of actual bones, that is, of purely physiological phenomena; the Physics was brought into play afterwards. In like manner, recourse must be had to Mathematics, if the physical law of the relations between weight and support is thoroughly to be explained. But it is distinctively characteristic of the modern scientist that, whenever he finds his own particular science thus resting on others, he begins his investigations at the top of the pile, and works downward; he, for instance, first makes sure of his physiological law, before beginning to look for a physical or mathematical explanation of it. It was the old-school scientist who used to begin at the bottom; and he generally managed to topple the whole pile over by the time he had reached the second story.

Now, the Art of Music is a series of manifestations of something through the medium of sound. Sound is the material, so to speak, of which Music is made; so the Science of Music must rest, in part at least, on Physical Acoustics. Again, Music is intended to be heard; so the Science of Music must rest also on Physiological Acoustics. Furthermore, Music, being something more than a mere irritation of the auditory nerves, and striking beyond and deeper than the mere perception of sound, appeals to the higher faculties of the mind; so Musical Science must also rest in part on Psychology. Here we have the tripod on which the Science of Music reposes: Psychology, Physiology, and Physics. This sounds somewhat different from the old dictum that Music was nothing but "a branch of Mathematics!" I do not mean to say that Musical Science can, in the end, dispense with Mathematics; in so far as Music rests on Physics, and Physics on Mathematics, just so far—and no farther—will Mathematics come into play in scientific musical research. But, if we are to proceed inductively, we must begin at the top of the pile; and Mathematics lies way down there, under Physics.

I have said that the Science of Music rests on the sciences of Psychology, Physiology, and Physics. But it is all-important to remember

that, although based, in a certain sense, on these three sciences, it is not identical with any of them; it is a separate science in itself. This fact has too often been forgotten. I remember having my attention aroused in the course of a sermon, one Sunday, by the preacher's making the astounding statement that Sir Isaac Newton really *knew more* about Music than Beethoven. This is perhaps as near to scientific accuracy as it is necessary for a clergyman to come; but, in truth, I should as soon think of saying Professor Trowbridge knew more about the Western Union Telegraph Company than Jay Gould. That Newton knew more about Acoustics than Beethoven is highly probable; but Acoustics is only the science of sound, and sound is no more Music than albumen, gelatine, and the phosphate and carbonate of lime are a bone, or a piece of broadcloth a coat.

As the discovery of natural law proceeds from the observation of natural phenomena, so must the discovery of musical law proceed from the observation of musical phenomena, that is, of Music itself. You must begin with learning what has actually been done in music; then can you begin to theorize. Of course, I do not mean to say that we should utterly abstain from forming hypotheses until we have exhausted the entire store of musical facts. That an hypothesis should be

based on the correct observation of some facts, is indispensable ; a tolerably well-grounded hypothesis holds good until its validity is disproved ; and, till it is disproved, it is often a serviceable guide to scientific observation. A man of scientific genius does not always need to observe an immensely long chain of connected phenomena before getting a hint at the law behind them ; and, once he has got this hint, he knows better than before to what point to direct his observations, and what experiments to make. By the light of his hypothesis he finds that many phenomena, which he might otherwise have overlooked, acquire quite a new significance. It is only the careless propounding of hypotheses, based on the observation of insufficient, or possibly irrelevant, facts, that I would deprecate. A clever jump at a musical theory may be a very good thing in its way ; only you must have some solid and well-ascertained musical facts to jump from. And it will be, upon the whole, a saving of both time and labour to make sure in the beginning of the exact nature of the phenomena you take for your point of departure. Be quite sure that they are really *musical* phenomena ; and remember that, when you have once taken your jump, the very next thing is to test your new position in every possible way, to see that it be really tenable. For it must be borne in mind that the

only sufficient proof of the validity of a musical theory, of its being the correct statement of a musical law, is its being found to be in harmony with observed musical phenomena. These form a tribunal from the verdict of which there is no appeal; they are inexorable.

Your musical law once discovered, its persistent operation once thoroughly ascertained, it may, and probably will, be necessary to call one or more of the sciences of Psychology, Physiology, Physics, and Mathematics to your aid, before the *mode* of its operation can be fully explained. And it may, likely enough, happen that the musical phenomena you have observed seem to jar a little with the known principles of some of these sciences. But let not that trouble you over-much; your theory may still be right. To return once more to my anatomical simile, I am sure Dr. Dwight would tell us that, given a complete knowledge of the function a bone is to perform, and of the physical principles by which its structure should be regulated, any decent mechanic would follow out these principles more exactly than Nature has done. Organic growth follows out the general scheme of physical law; but with a certain genial freedom in the matter of detail. Just so the Art of Music follows out the general scheme of acoustical law, but does not always bind itself to the precise letter.

This lack of absolute exactness in the way Music carries out physical, or physiological, principles makes it extremely dangerous to base a musical theory on the observation of purely acoustical phenomena. Probably no more striking example of the hazardousness of such a plan can be found than that furnished by one of the conclusions Helmholtz arrives at in his *Lehre der Tonempfindungen.* Surely Helmholtz holds a position in the world of Science which forbids of any of his conclusions being attacked without the greatest circumspection. His investigations have been conducted wholly in accordance with the modern scientific spirit ; he bases his theories on a well-nigh miraculously acute observation of phenomena, and his reasoning is as flawless as his observation. The instance is a singularly instructive one, and deserves careful examination.

Helmholtz tries to prove that the musical scale which has now been in use for generations and generations, the so-called *tempered scale,* is intrinsically irrational and bad. He bases his proof on certain perfectly well-established physical and physiological laws, the discovery of many of which we owe to his own untiring investigations. He says the tempered scale is bad, because every note in it is, physically speaking, a little out of tune, and it consequently renders the formation of exact concords impossible.

In the first place, I may be pardoned for saying that this conclusion of Helmholtz's, quite apart from its truth or untruth, seems to me utterly unscientific in its very nature. The tempered scale is a musical fact, and its goodness, or badness, is something which Helmholtz, *as a scientific man*, has absolutely no business to call in question. He has no more scientific right to find fault with the tempered scale than Professor Huxley would have to object to the anatomy of the horse.

Some years ago I happened to read a newspaper article in which the writer tried to prove that the bicycle was constructed on a wholly wrong principle. The argument was that, as the crank by which the wheel is turned is much shorter than the spoke of the wheel, it results that the rider virtually applies the motive force to the short arm of a lever, instead of to the long arm, and thus suffers an enormous loss of power. But the writer forgot that the prime object of the bicycle is not to gain power, but speed; it is not made to draw heavy weights, but to carry its rider at a very rapid pace. Its mechanism is devised solely and simply with a view to transforming power into velocity. Thus the principle of its construction is not wrong, but right!

Helmholtz's conclusion regarding the tempered scale seems to me of much the same nature as

this newspaper correspondent's error about the bicycle. His proof hinges on the assumption that the *sine qua non* of a good musical scale is its permitting of the formation of physically and mathematically exact concords; if this assumption is invalidated, his whole proof falls to the ground at once. I have already said that, to my mind, Helmholtz had no scientific right to say either *good* or *bad* in the matter; but let me waive this objection for a moment, and admit Helmholtz's *artistic* right to have a voice in the discussion. I can do this with all the better grace that Music is, after all, an art, and Musical Science should never quite lose sight of this fact. I admit, therefore, that the tempered scale is bad *from his point of view.* But here lies the whole gist of the question!

Although the tempered scale does not admit of the formation of mathematically exact concords, it does admit of the establishment of infinitely more numerous and complex organic relations between its component notes than are possible with any scale the several degrees of which are tuned in exact accordance with the physical law of overtones. And the dominant tendency of the growth and development of the musical sense in Man, for many centuries, has been in the direction of appreciating more and more complex and manifold relations between notes of different pitch. Helmholtz says the

modern musical ear has become brutalized by long usage in hearing inaccurate intervals. But would it not be at least as reasonable to suppose that Helmholtz's ear, by long working at the most delicate acoustical experiments, had been trained to a degree of sensitiveness in one particular direction such as should properly be called abnormal and morbid ? And, in suggesting this, I am fully aware that the by no means impertinent question may be asked : Can the musical ear possibly be too delicately sensitive to accuracy of pitch ? In one sense, it certainly can not ; still it may truly be said, on the other hand, that, if its exceeding delicacy and sensitiveness lead it to reject the results of a long and continuous process of evolution in the art, to wish to sacrifice these results to a mathematical accuracy of interval which would necessarily stultify them, its keenness in this particular direction must be called excessive and unmusical. So far from being brutalized, the modern musical ear has been gradually educated to the point of perceiving and comprehending musical relations so complex and far-reaching, it has so extended the field of its activity, that the hair-splitting musical sense of the ancient Greek, with all its nice appreciation of infinitesimal differences of pitch, seems merely rudimentary in comparison. As I have said, the whole evolution of the musical sense in Man—that is, in

European Man—during many centuries, and, with it, the evolution of the whole Art of Music itself, has almost continuously been tending away from imputing especial importance to such nice distinctions, and in the direction of establishing more and more complex and far-reaching relations between all the notes of the musical system. And it is unquestionable that the tempered scale, and it alone, is the basis of a musical system in which all these far-reaching relations are not only possible, but rational. Our modern tonal system, with its twelve keys, or tonalities, forms a closed circle, starting at any point on the circumference of which you can go on and on, and at last find yourself back again at the exact point of departure ; every one of these twelve keys stands in a definite, rational, and *immediate* relation to all the others. And this is possible *only* in a system based on the equally tempered scale. But, after all, the most important point in the whole matter is that our present tonal system *actually is* based on the tempered scale ; this is the point the paramount importance of which Helmholtz seems to me to have undervalued! In other words, he seems to have ignored the momentous significance of the fact that the establishment of the tempered scale, some generations ago, was the goal toward which the whole evolution of the Art of Music had been steadily tending for cen-

turies, and that the scale itself has been the basis of its whole further development since.

Helmholtz's physical and physiological researches have, in many instances, led him far on the way toward a satisfactory explanation of certain established musical laws; but in this case I can not help thinking him in error, in not recognizing the equally tempered scale as a musical fact, to be scientifically accounted for and explained as such. He seems to have looked upon it merely as the embodiment of a musical theory, the validity of which was to be proved or disproved. And yet, you may say, as sound is the material of which Music is made, and the ear the organ through which sound is perceived, how can it be possible that a musical law should, even in the slightest degree, contravene an acoustical law? Must not the laws of Music harmonize with those of Physiological and Physical Acoustics? Indeed, they must!—just as much as the laws of Physiology itself must harmonize with those of Physics; just as much, *but no more!* I gladly admit that certain physical phenomena, and the mechanism of the human ear by which these phenomena are perceived by the brain, point directly to the general scheme of our musical scale. It is also quite true that certain physical laws point as directly to the general scheme of the structure of the cat. Bilateral symmetry is one of the essen-

tial principles of this structure; for, in the cat's case, bilateral symmetry means vigour, ease, agility and sureness of movement; lopsidedness would be a defect, for it is through vigour, sureness, and agility of movement that the cat is able to catch its prey and survive in the general struggle for existence. The cat's hind legs, for instance, must be of the same length. And yet we find that all that Nature has done for the cat, in this particular, has been to make her two hind legs *nearly enough of the same length for all practical purposes;* you can hardly find a cat in the world whose hind legs are mathematically symmetrical. I have already said that Nature follows physical laws with a certain genial freedom; Art does the same. As soon as any competent physiologist, say Professor Huxley, admits that the cat is a failure on the part of Nature, I will begin to think about admitting that the tempered scale is a failure on the part of Music; but not till then.

I have brought up this conclusion of Helmholtz's regarding the equally tempered scale as an example of the danger attending any attempt to make even the most exact observation of, and reasoning from, purely acoustical phenomena the basis of a musical theory. For do not lose sight of the fact that doing this is really tantamount to relinquishing the inductive method of scientific research for the old

deductive one. In so far as the Science of Music rests on Acoustics, and this on Mathematics, all scientific research that proceeds from the first to the second, and from the second to the third, virtually proceeds inductively from the special to the general, from the concrete to the abstract; but all reasoning that proceeds in the opposite direction is essentially deductive, and hence irreconcilable with the true spirit of modern Science. And it seems to me that Helmholtz has furnished a fine example of that vice I have pointed out in the deductive method, that of tempting those who employ it to "conjugate themselves into the imperative mood;" for Helmholtz has allowed himself to say *good* and *bad,* and from this to the categorical imperative, "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not," is but a short step. No matter how, nor on what data, a musical theory may be built up, acoustical tests are insufficient of themselves to establish its validity; it may stand the test of Physics and Physiology till doomsday, but if a well-established *musical* fact is at any time found to run counter to it, woe to your theory! that fact has it on the hip!

F.-J. Fétis, the great Belgian musical theorist, once found fault with a certain progression in one of Beethoven's symphonies, on the ground that it contravened musical law. Whether the story told by Berlioz be true, or not—of Fétis's "correct-

ing" the passage in his proposed edition of Beethoven's symphonies, and he (Berlioz) making such a fuss about this piece of "Vandalism" that Fétis was shamed into restoring the original version—we certainly know that subsequent study of this passage led Fétis to the discovery of a musical law which no theorist before him had ever been able to formulate. Beethoven was right, after all: and Fétis's chief mistake was that he did not take this for granted in the beginning. For Fétis to disapprove of a progression in a Beethoven symphony was very like what Professor Huxley would be guilty of, if he should cry out to Nature: "Ho! stop there! You have made a mistake in this horse!" To call the tempered scale bad, after Sebastian Bach had called it good, savours of much the same audacity. For the man of science both are attempts *ultra crepidam*. Yet it must be granted that Fétis's first attitude in the matter was almost the universal one half a century ago, and is by no means uncommon even now; and how many dogmatic theorists have had the perspicacity and moral courage to recall an error, and learn something from it, as he did?

It is, no doubt, absolutely true that Music is not, properly speaking, a natural product, that its growth and development have not been the result of the operation of what are commonly called the

Laws of Nature. Neither is it, like Painting or Sculpture, the representation or portrayal of any object in nature. It is purely a product of the human—perhaps originally of the animal—brain ; it is what Man has made it. But this does not in the least contradict the fact that the growth and development of the Art of Music have been, in the most exact and fullest sense of the term, the result of a process of EVOLUTION. No one will feel inclined to deny that Music was brought into being to satisfy an inborn instinct of the human race. This may be a mere supposition, but it is an unavoidable one ; it is moreover borne out by the subsequent history of the art. Almost all the steps forward the Art of Music has taken have been due to the instinct of musicians, in exceedingly few cases to the calculations of scientists. And, to appreciate how purely instinctively musicians have pushed the art forward, we must remember that—since Music emerged from her Silurian Period, and especially since the year 1600—its onward steps have been, with few exceptions, in direct contravention of established rules and supposed laws.

Now and then, if, upon the whole, seldom, a man of science has made a lucky guess that really led to the discovery of something. Pythagoras did this, *a priori*, with his divisions of the monochord ; he introduced the elements of order into a musical

system so chaotic as hardly to deserve the name. And yet see how exceedingly little that was permanent we owe to Pythagoras's experiments! To his speculations we owe next to nothing! He did happen — and in harmony with a law which he certainly never in the least suspected, the law of overtones — to hit right, when he established the intervals of the perfect octave, and the perfect 5th and 4th; his getting the "*tonos*," or tone, by subtracting the one from the other was also a tolerably lucky venture. But his subdivision of the tetrachord has been proved to be all wrong, irrational, and unmusical. Moreover the whole modal system that was based on his subdivision of the tetrachord and the complicated inversions of tetrachord and pentachord, and survived—with various modifications in detail, introduced by St. Ambrose and Gregory the Great—well into the seventeenth century, when it was overthrown by the tonal system —this whole modal system is now seen to have been essentially artificial, the outgrowth of mere mathematical speculation and *a priori* settling *what ought to be,* without regard for musical facts. Not one of the old Greek, Ambrosian, or Gregorian modal scales had any inherent *raison d'être;* none of them sprang from an interior musical necessity. They were purely conventional. It is only the modern tonal scales, with the struggling asunder

of their fourth and seventh degrees, and their leading-note striving toward the tonic, that are firmly rooted in the very nature of Music. Note, too, how the old modes, being merely conventional, brought with them the necessity of all music written in them being bound around and hampered by the strictest and most nearly countless conventional rules known in the history of the art. Think of the number and inexorable strictness of the rules of the old vocal simple counterpoint of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries! Yet the intelligently profound student of harmony to-day sees clearly enough that these rules were, for the most part, necessary; polyphonic writing in the modal system could not have got on without them; modal harmony would have ceased to be modal harmony by disobeying them. An unprepared dissonance, for instance, is musically inconceivable—M. Bourgault-Ducoudray to the contrary notwithstanding—when unexplained to the ear by the sense of tonality. Monteverde's free use of the dominant 7th was the death-knell of the whole modal system; with it TONAL HARMONY was born, and Music developed a spinal column and became vertebrate. And Monteverde's use of the chord of the dominant 7th—no one had ever heard of a *chord* of the 7th before!—was simply and solely in obedience to his musical instinct; he did what was

tabooed by every theorist of his day, his innovation was condemned and ridiculed ; but it had that in it that gave the Art of Music the most puissant onward push it had known since old Hucbald first tried his two-voice *organum* in 5ths.

The fact that the evolution of Music has found its motive force in Man, and not in Nature, does not, it seems to me, in the least invalidate the methods of scientific musical research I have advocated. Substitute the Human Mind for Nature, and you have a Science of Music that is, in every other respect, exactly similar to the so-called natural sciences. Remember also that, if teleological considerations are to be admitted at all, one of the objects that can be rationally attributed to Music, as an independent art, is the satisfaction of the specific musical sense in Man. But, as all teleology is largely speculative, this domain should be entered upon only with the greatest caution. Inductive Musical Science has not primarily to do with Mathematics, Physics, Physiology, nor Psychology ; it must, it is true, often have recourse to these, but it has primarily to do with Music itself, with the analytic and comparative study of the rich store of actual music that has been handed down from age to age. And, in its search for musical law, it must scrutinize this music, not with the smile or frown of dogmatic criticism, but with the

keen eye of dispassionate investigation. There should be no question of what Music ought, or ought not, to be; the only questions that interest the Science of Music are *what Music is and has been, and how and why it has become what it is.*

Although the only essential difference between musical evolution and the evolution of natural organic forms is that Nature herself plays the part in the one that the Human Mind does in the other, this difference must none the less be recognized as of great importance, and should never be lost sight of. No scientific theory has ever had any influence upon the course of Nature. The solar system never cared a whit for Kepler nor Newton, any more than it did for the older astronomers, who made the earth the centre of everything. The earth did not move to please Galileo, neither did it stop to please Aristotle. It never entered Nature's heap to abhor a vacuum because men said she did, and we all have seen how she has more than once obstinately refused to make an earthquake to order for Mr. Wiggin. Read the laws of Nature aright, or read them wrong, natural phenomena will be produced in accordance with the law, not with your interpretation thereof. But with Music the case is somewhat different. Composers, the producers of Music, have not invariably been quite

so deaf to scientific theory as Nature is ; they have not always worked in absolute harmony with musical law, but have at times been, to a greater or less extent, biassed by false expositions of the same. Much music has been written in accordance with what were once deemed eternal and unalterable laws of the art, but have since been found to be no better than mere rules, based on ungrounded hypotheses, or on faulty or incomplete theories. This reaction of musical theory upon Music itself has probably exerted no very sensible influence upon the real evolution of the art, save perhaps in the way of retarding it, and making it more gradual than it might otherwise have been ; yet this reaction of theory upon musical practice, this influence of the theorist over the composer, does introduce a disturbing element into the scientific study of musical evolution, an element which must carefully be eliminated before the true laws of the art can be read aright.

In studying the art by the light of historic documents, it is of prime importance to scrutinize with the greatest care all elements of change we may find in it from time to time. The appearance of an unprecedented phenomenon should always put us on our guard. No matter of what nature this phenomenon may seem to be, at first sight, we must be careful to see exactly what influ-

ence it exerted upon the subsequent development of the art; whether it was really of the nature of a "variation" ("accidental" or otherwise) that represented the first tentative step of a new phase of evolution, leading to developments of permanent value, or merely an ephemeral *ignis fatuus* flash that led only to a no-thoroughfare. This caution should be exercised equally, whether we read the history of Music forwards or backwards, whether we try to trace back the pedigree of a present musical form, or start with an old development and study its influence upon what came after it. And I hardly need say that exceedingly little weight is, as a rule, to be attributed to contemporary comment on, or explanation of, new steps in musical evolution, or even to what was thought of them at the time by their originators themselves. For, as I have already said, such progressive steps were almost always taken instinctively by composers, and not in consequence of any clear foresight or precalculative process of reasoning on their part. Indeed such innovators hardly ever appreciated the full value of their inventions; and, as for contemporary theorists, they were the last to impute any value to them at all. A composer would make a new combination, a new progression, because his ear told him it was good, even though, as was generally the case, it ran counter to the most esteemed

musical theories of his day; and, likely enough, the composer himself would have been only one jot less surprised than his most scandalized critics, could he but have been told that this new combination, or progression, of his, far from being a piece of lawlessness, was really in perfect harmony with musical law. He had not discovered a new law, although he had unconsciously applied it; what he had done was to perceive for the first time a new musical fact. Thus practice has, in Music, almost invariably led the way for theory; the perception of facts has preceded the recognition of principles.

This leads me to one of the most important points in musical evolution: the gradual evolution of what may be called the specific musical sense in Man. By this I mean the intuitive or acquired power of perceiving, through the ear, the manifold relations existing between notes of different pitch, either depending on, or independent of, certain rhythmic conditions; relations of melody or harmony, of consonance or dissonance, of mutual attraction or repulsion, of tonality or modality. That these relations between notes of different pitch are eternal, and governed by immutable laws, seems to me unquestionable; though I must once more caution the reader not to forget the distinction to be drawn between an actual law and the mere theoretic exposition thereof. It seems to me

cess of evolution. But the two cases are quite different. Newton observed no new phenomenon; people had seen apples fall before, time out of mind. What he did do that was new, was to take a hint from a perfectly familiar phenomenon, which led him to the discovery of the law which governed it. Monteverde, on the other hand, discovered no law at all; he did not find out *why* the tritone was magnetic, neither had he an inkling of a tithe of the numerous musical affinities which were destined one day to be recognized as resulting from this magnetism. He simply perceived for the first time that the tritone *was* magnetic; and this perception could come to him only through his musical sense. I call this, perhaps, not a conclusive proof, but at least a strong indication, of an actual enlargement, new development, step forwards in evolution — call it what you will — of Monteverde's musical sense; for to perceive the magnetic character of the tritone is exactly like perceiving that fire is hot. The tritone itself was no novelty in music; it had been made the subject of infinite speculation and no little experimentalizing long before Monteverde's day; theorists had stigmatized it as the *Diabolus in Musica*, and not entirely without reason, for its magnetic quality is all that cures it of its "devilishness," and this magnetic quality is just what they had not been

able to perceive. If people had gone on using fire for centuries, without noticing that it was hot, and somebody suddenly appeared who did perceive its heat, I should say that it looked very like a new step forward in the evolution of the sense for heat and cold in that person. And, until Monteverde, people had gone on thinking there was no magnetism in the tritone, although the magnetic character of some other intervals had long been recognized.

That the gradual evolution of Man's specific musical sense has been inextricably interwoven, both in action and reaction, with the evolution of the Art of Music itself may be taken for granted. And to discover just how far, and in what manner the one has been conditioned by the other is at once one of the most interesting and difficult tasks the Science of Music has to impose upon itself. I have said that substituting the Human Mind for Nature, as the chief motive force in musical evolution, introduces a certain element of difficulty into scientific musical research. This difficulty is not lessened by the fact that it was long before Music was, either speculatively or practically, recognized as an independent art, and by the enormous influence the sister arts of Poetry and the Drama have often exerted upon its development. One of the most perplexing problems for the musical scientist to solve is: How far has the evolution of music been

conditioned by forces inherent in its own nature, and how far by the outside influence of Poetry and the Drama? In other words, positing the human Mind as the main-spring of musical evolution, how far has Man conditioned this evolution to satisfy purely æsthetic cravings, on the one hand, and emotional demands, on the other?

Critical, that is to say, *inductive* Philosophy, as represented by Schopenhauer and Wagner, and inductive Science, as represented by Darwin, agree on one point: that the primordial musical monad is the cry of pleasure, pain, or passion given forth by such animals as are possessed of vocal organs, or by Man himself. Thus the original germ of Music is the instinctive and impulsive expression of emotion through the medium of sound. Darwin found reason for believing that the first step in the evolution of this "primordial cry" into music was made, not by Man, but by humbler members of the animal kingdom; that especially the cry of the male animal during the season of courtship was not merely an impulsive, involuntary vocal expression of emotion—like the sudden cry of pain called forth by a bodily wound—but largely a voluntary expression, with the conscious purpose of exciting a corresponding emotion in the female listener. Nay, more than this; for, as "the female canary always chooses the best singer, and, in a state of

nature, the female finch selects that male out of a hundred whose note pleases her most," it seems quite likely that the cries of some animals, especially of some birds, during courtship are not only given forth with the direct intent of exciting emotion, but are voluntarily modified for the purpose of giving pleasure to the listener. The rivalry between male birds in singing, each one doing his best to outsing his competitors, is well known, and seems to point directly to the conclusion that actual beauty of tone is consciously aimed at. When we come to Man, this rudimentary modification of the "primordial cry" becomes vastly more marked; the cry gains definiteness and variety of pitch and distinctness of rhythmic character, and is soon to be recognized as a rude sort of music.

That the desire to render sound pleasurable was really the prime motive force which conditioned the evolution of the "primordial cry" into music, is a conclusion that seems to me unavoidable. For, had the "primordial cry" contained within itself the whole potency and power of musical development, had the motive force which gave its evolution a musical direction been purely emotional, it would seem as if, the higher we mount in the scale of musical forms, the more vivid, intense, and convincing must be their power of expressing emotion. But this is known not to be

the case. No music ever written can vie with the "primordial cry" itself, as an intense and vivid expression of emotion. The motive force which has brought about the gradual evolution of musical forms seems, on the contrary, to have been by no means purely emotional, but chiefly æsthetic in its nature. As far as I see, we can not escape the conclusion that it is to Man's æsthetic sense, his sense for beauty, that we chiefly, if not wholly, owe the musical evolution of the primordial monad we found to be rooted in emotion.

Mysterious in its prime essence as is the pleasure we derive from the perception of that equally mysterious something we call Beauty, the so-called æsthetic sense, through which our perceptions of beauty are obtained, is to a certain extent capable of analysis. Our perceptions of beauty are normally conveyed to us through one or the other of the two higher senses—the sense of sight or the sense of hearing.[1] The perceptions of beauty we obtain through these two senses are twofold; the one sort is purely sensual, the pleasure we derive from it being solely conditioned by special modes or degrees of nervous irritation. This category

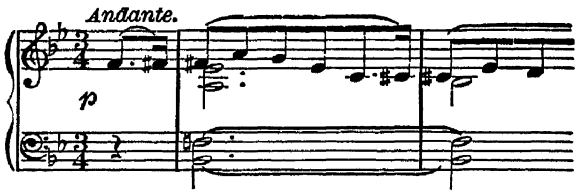
[1] It would take me too long to recapitulate here all the arguments which tend to prove that *Sight* and *Hearing* are the only *æsthetic senses*, properly so called. These arguments are to be found set forth at great length, and with abundant wealth of illustration, in the first chapter of Edmund Gurney's *The Power of Sound*.

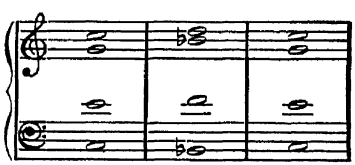
comprises the perception of *colour* through the eye, and the perception of *quality of sound* (clang-tint) and *dynamic intensity of sound* (loudness or softness) through the ear. The other sort is intellectual, the pleasure we derive from it depending on our perception of the relation between the several component parts of an object, and of each and all of these parts to the whole. In this category falls the perception of visual or musical *form*. The prime factors of musical form are relations of pitch (either simultaneous or consecutive) and relations of time (Rhythm).

Now, even the first steps in the evolution of the "primordial cry" into music were modifications tending, not toward imparting to it more intense emotional expressiveness, but toward giving it beauty of clang-tint, that it might appeal not only to the responsive emotions of the listener, but also to her sense for beauty; and what subsequent formal modifications the "cry" underwent, tending to give it something in the way of musical organism, must have had the same end in view, namely to satisfy the æsthetic sense. And just here is where that particular phase of the æsthetic sense which I have called the specific musical sense in Man came into play.

The evolution of this sense in Man seems to have gone forward even more slowly than the

evolution of the Art of Music itself; its full development—if we can rightly call it fully developed even now—is quite recent. The following passage in Schumann's B-flat variations for two pianofortes :—



which sounds so beautiful to our modern ear, would, beyond a doubt, have been utterly inexplicable and hideous to Palestrina's perception; whereas this progression :—

of which countless examples are to be found in Palestrina, strikes us as being not entirely a thing of beauty. And note, by the way, that the Schumann passage which sounds so sweet to us contains some exceedingly harsh dissonances, while the ugly Palestrina progression runs on mere concords! How is it that Palestrina and we agree so

ill? Simply that our musical sense has grown to the perception of relations, of which Palestrina, way back there in the sixteenth century, had not the faintest inkling. In that little passage Schumann brings into play a musical principle, of the value, of the very nature, of which Palestrina had no more notion than a Digger Indian has of the subjunctive mood. Schumann's harsh dissonances are *explained* and accounted for to our ear by our sense of tonality, a sense of which Palestrina could have had no more than a vague premonitory suspicion, if he had that; and Palestrina's progression seems harsh and ugly to us, simply because it runs on two entirely unrelated chords, and hence offends our sense of tonality. Palestrina found nothing ugly in it, because he had no sense of tonality to offend! His specific musical sense was at a lower stage of evolution than ours.

In like manner the evolution of musical forms, of the Art of Music itself, the record of which is nothing but the history of music, has passed through various, more or less sharply defined, successive stages. The picture it presents to the scientific student is singularly like that shown by evolution in the animal kingdom; there is no single one of the higher forms of modern Music, the pedigree of which can not be traced back to older, simpler forms. And, as in the animal king-

dom, so also in Music, some of the oldest and simplest organisms have exhibited a power of survival amid the general struggle for existence that has enabled them to thrive, side by side with their more highly organized and complex descendants; while in every case all the successive stages in the evolution of the latter lie as plainly before us as Professor Huxley's five stages in the evolution of the horse. There are no "missing links" to be supplied by calculation nor conjecture. And it may be said, without speaking too tropically, that in musical evolution—always substituting the Human Mind for Nature—the "struggle for life" has gone on under, and been influenced and guided by, conditions very similar to those found in the history of all organic evolution: accidental variation, habitat, and heredity.

Although the modification of old musical forms, and the production of new ones, have by no means been invariably preceded by a recognizable onward step in the evolution of Man's musical sense, that is, by a perception of a hitherto unknown musical fact on the part of composers, the history of the art shows that no advance has ever been made by Man's musical sense without being soon followed by a corresponding modification of old forms and development of new ones. It seems safe to conclude that, of all conditions favourable to the ap-

parition of new forms, the most favourable is that brought about by an onward step in the evolution of the musical sense in Man.

But, side by side with this sense, we find that another force of a very different nature has been at work, the activity of which is also productive of conditions favourable to the development of new forms. This force is the instinctive tendency of Man to recognize Music as a vehicle for emotional expression. Indeed these two forces, the one emotional and the other æsthetic, seem generally to have worked together, mutually controlling and counterbalancing each other. Yet there have been periods in the history of the art when one or the other of these forces has manifestly got the upper hand. There have been periods, for instance, when Music seemed almost wholly to forget that emotional yearning from which it was first born, and to cling solely to its purely æsthetic purpose. That Music, in so doing, could really satisfy Man's demands upon it for any considerable time might seem strange and unaccountable; one might wonder at music-loving and music-producing Mankind long deriving such pleasure from the mere perception of musical form, and finding the satisfaction of its sense for beauty so engrossing, as to be content to devote all its energies to the development and perfection of the plastic side of Music,

to giving it as high an organism as possible, with little or no care for its capacity for emotional expression, were it not for one consideration. This is the essentially emotional character of our perception of Beauty *per se*. We all have heard of, and doubtless many of us have experienced, the heart-beating caused by seeing that serenest of statues, the Venus of Milo; and it is quite conceivable that musicians should long find the emotional demands of their nature amply satisfied by sheer musical beauty, without craving any more specific emotional expressiveness in Music that is implied in the very fact of its being beautiful. Thus we have seen musical forms spring up and continue to develop and acquire a more and more highly organized structure, in obedience to the dictates of the purely æsthetic sense in Man, up to the point where all the organic principles apprehensible by his specific musical sense were exhausted, and no further evolution seemed possible. At such times the development of the art comes to a stand-still; the evolution stops until Man's musical sense itself develops some new faculty, which enables it to perceive, or apply, a hitherto unsuspected organic principle. Such a new principle once discovered, or, may be, only blindly applied, the evolution of the art sets out afresh; old forms are modified and new ones produced and perfected, until the

new principle is in its turn exhausted, and another period of stagnation sets in.

But it must be remembered that the evolution of the specific musical sense in Man seems to be entirely an automatic process; that is to say, its efficient causes lie wholly hidden from us. Man can not at will force this sense of his to take a new step forward, but has to wait for it to take the step when it can. Indeed any new development of his musical sense is the very last thing Man expects or thinks of; it is even unimaginable by him, until it has actually taken place. The sense for tonality, for instance, must have been as inconceivable to the ancient Greek as the power of sight is to a man congenitally blind. So, when Music reaches a point where all existing organic forms have been worked out, and the possibilities of plastic evolution seem exhausted, it is absolutely idle for Man to look for a sudden development of his musical sense to produce new possibilities; for this new development will not come at his bidding, he has no means of knowing when nor how it will come, nor even whether it be destined to come at all. None of us knows whether he has got to the end of his tether in this respect, or not! Have all the possible relations and affinities between notes of different pitch been apprehended by the human ear? It seems to us as if they had; but who

shall say? Surely Palestrina thought his musical sense as complete as his sense of hearing; but succeeding ages have proved his mistake, and, for aught we know, we may be as much in error as he.

What musicians, the producers of music, actually have done, in times when all existing musical forms were exhausted, and all further evolution seemed hopeless, is this: instead of seeking to evolve still more highly organized forms from the old, effete types, they have, as a rule, turned their attention quite away from this matter, and concentrated their energy upon imparting to the art a more highly potentized emotional expressive power, seeking to connect Music more immediately than before with Man's psychical experience, and make it strike roots deeper and deeper into human life, emotion, and passion. It is at such periods that, as Wagner has said, Music once more becomes mindful of her first estate, and the "primordial cry" again rings through the aisles and reverberates from the dome of her temple. For it is especially noteworthy that such fresh attempts to make Music the vehicle for emotional expression are at first accompanied by a return to musical forms of such low organism that, compared to the highly developed and complex forms they seek to displace, they seem almost protoplastic. Such times are re-

volutionary and seemingly anarchic; the whilom supremacy of Man's æsthetic sense is over (for a while), and his demand for emotional expressiveness rules the hour. Such sudden incursions of highly expressive, but almost primordial, forms into the domain of Music have at times proved exceedingly dangerous, if not absolutely fatal, to the survival of all hitherto recognized forms of higher organism. It is hard for the weary old complex forms to hold their own against the inroads of these Silurian mollusks; and the rapidity with which the latter have exterminated the former, by virtue of their superior expressive power, seems a pretty good proof that, although a more or less highly organized form is indispensable for Music fully to satisfy Man's æsthetic sense, his sense for beauty, the vital principle in Music, is, after all, emotional expression.

Still, the absolute autocracy of emotional expressiveness in Music has never lasted very long. As soon as the novelty of highly expressive, but organically rudimentary, musical forms wears off, the violent appeal they make to Man's emotional nature ceases to compensate him for their intrinsic musical poverty; his starving æsthetic sense craves its old nourishment, and he longs for music that shall be not only expressive, but beautiful also. To be sure, a return to the *old* highly organized

forms is out of the question; for they are no longer able to satisfy the demands he has just learnt to make upon expression. He finds them beautiful as ever, perhaps, but cold, formal, and, upon the whole, rather dreary. He can not throw his whole heart and soul into them as he used to! He can still listen with delight to what the old masters wrote in these forms, but write in them himself he can not; life has gone out from them, and all he can do with them is artificially to galvanize them into a merely conventional semblance of life. They are dead for once and all!

At such periods we are pretty sure to find a new era of evolution set in. A sort of intermarriage takes place between the discarded forms, with their complex organism, and the new rudimentary expressive ones; and the offspring of this union will show a more or less marked resemblance to both parents. The new evolution has begun, and will in time produce forms of as high, or even higher and more complex, organism than the old ones of yore, while they retain much of the emotionally expressive power of their simpler ancestors. With such diastole-systole of Man's craving for emotional expression and for the satisfaction of his specific musical sense, as its prime moving and conditioning forces, has the evolution of the Art of Music gone forward.

This evolution, in all its myriad details, is what the Science of Music has to reveal to us; it has to observe and classify all its phenomena, discover all its laws, and no doubt account for and explain the same by having recourse to the aid of other sciences, such as Psychology, Physiology, Physics, and Mathematics. It must proceed inductively throughout. Such a Science of Music will be, as I have said, a science worthy of the name and of our present century of scientific progress.

I may be asked why I say *Will be?* why I use the future tense? I began by saying Musical Science was young; I might almost say that it is hardly born yet. No doubt the world has had well-nigh endless treatises on Music that purported to be scientific; many an earnest and hard-working musical theorist has been born and carried to his grave. But I have seen no theory of Harmony yet, —to take up only this one point,—which was able to account for and explain the harmony of Sebastian Bach! A vast number of the explanations currently given in books on Harmony are really no explanations at all; they remind one of that terrible old "Subjunctive of the Indirect Question" that was once the bugbear of every intelligent school-boy. It made him feel in his heart of heart that his master's armour was penetrable; for I fancy none of us, the head-master and Andrews &

Stoddard to the contrary notwithstanding, ever could be really persuaded that "*Dixi quid bonum sit*" was an indirect *question!* Then again, the old deductive method keeps cropping up ever and anon; speculation, guided by what Schopenhauer once called "a misleading desire for architectural symmetry of plan," too often tries to do the work of logical reasoning from accurately observed premises. Sweeping and irrational generalizations neatly tie up irreconcilable things in one and the same bundle; at times it seems as if the very last thing to occur to a theorist, anxious to explain why this or that is so, was to try and find out how it became so!

One of the most serious troubles has been that musical theorists have far too seldom been men of scientific training; they have too often lacked the very first requisite for scientific research: a well cultivated power of observation. Hence their prevailing tendency to "evolve the camel out of their own brain." And, as for that worst vice of the deductive method, the categorical imperative, they have coquetted with that to a sufficiently scandalous extent. No wonder that acousticians—who, as true men of science, ought, however, to have known better—have taken their cue from them, and treated the Art of Music as fair game for their "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not," and made

themselves a bore to the world by telling musicians "what they ought to do!"

And, worst of all, musicians have not always been deaf to theorists and theories against which their own better instinct should have put them on their guard. Even Hector Berlioz—who was not in general particularly docile under the sway of conventional rules—once took upon himself to find fault with "the third inversion of the chord of the dominant 9th" in the prelude to the third act of Wagner's *Lohengrin*, saying that it was "unendurable to his ear." Ah! Berlioz; were you quite sure that that E, F-sharp, A, C, D really *was* the "third inversion" of the dominant 9th? Or was that pompous melody in the basses, trombones, and tuba not really a *bass*, after all, but merely a melody, played against a plain harmonic accompaniment, like any other melody, only below, instead of above it? It seems to me, Berlioz, that you, for once, let your eye—and your schooling—get the better of your ear; you did not feel the force of the *unwritten law* that makes your objection ridiculous!

But it is none the less to the shame of Musical Science that this, or any other, law should remain "unwritten." It is to her shame that she has not yet formulated and explained the many things that almost every cultivated musician feels in his very

bones, and knows as well as he knows that fire burns, but can not formulate nor explain. Neither is it his business to formulate and explain such things ; his intuitive knowledge of them is enough for his high purposes. It is for the Science of Music, for the musical scientist,—not for the musical artist,—to explain them.

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